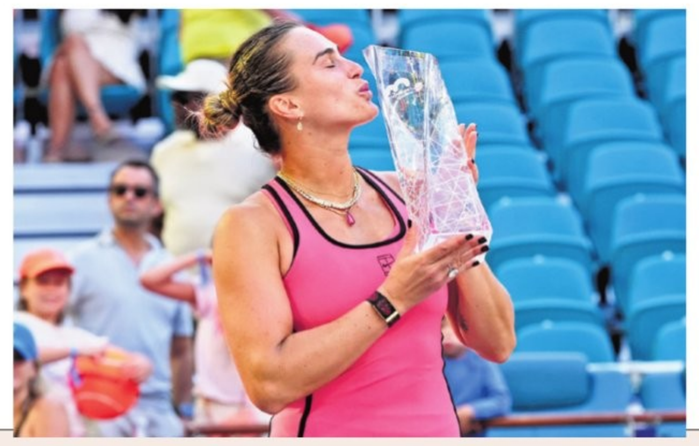
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • MARCH 30, 2026 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION



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WORLD NO. 1 SABALENKA COMPLETES 'SUNSHINE DOUBLE' AT MIAMI OPEN

Aryna Sabalenka made history as she beat Coco Gauff in the Miami Open women's singles final 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 on Saturday. A look...

FIRST SINCE SWIATEK TO SEAL THE DOUBLE

The World No. 1 overpowered Gauff in the first and third sets with sizzling groundstroke winners and became the fifth woman and the first since Iga Swiatek in 2022 to accomplish the "Sunshine Double" — winning Indian Wells followed by Miami in the same season. It was Sabalenka's second straight title at the Miami Open, Gauff's hometown tournament

MEANS A LOT: ARYNA AFTER HISTORIC FEAT

- "It means a lot," Sabalenka said after joining Poland's Swiatek, German great Steffi Graf, Belgian Kim Clijsters and fellow Belarusian Victoria Azarenka on the list of women to win both titles in same year
- "My goal always been to put my name in the history, and I just did it," the World No. 1 added after winning the title

5

SABALENKA IS FIFTH WOMAN TO COMPLETE 'SUNSHINE DOUBLE'

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

West Asia situation is sensitive and warrants restraint in public discourse, says Modi; Don keeps option for ground ops open in Iran, sends more troops

CONG REMARKS COULD ENDANGER INDIAN LIVES: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves *nelkathir* (rice sheaf) during an election rally in Palakkad, Kerala on Sunday | PTI

SHYAM P V @ Palakkad

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said his government is doing everything in its power to ensure the safety of Indians working and living in Gulf countries but the Congress is trying to politicise the ongoing Iran war by making "dangerous and irresponsible" remarks.

Speaking at an election rally in Palakkad in Kerala, from where lakhs of people work in Gulf countries, Modi said the situation remains sensitive and warrants restraint in public discourse. However, he alleged, Congress leaders are issuing reckless statements amid an evolving international situation that could endanger the lives of Indians.

"It appears as though the Congress is willing to risk the lives of nearly one crore Indians living in the Gulf, merely to gain political advantage," Modi said.

The PM's comments come days after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked the Centre's handling of the West Asia crisis, terming India's foreign policy 'compromised' and 'a joke'.

"The PM will do what US and Israel say. He will not work in the interest of India," Gandhi had said last week, criticising India's foreign policy stance.

Speaking in Palakkad, Modi stressed the Centre is closely monitoring the situation and taking measures to mitigate the impact on India and Indian nationals living in the region.

"The welfare of Indian citizens abroad is central to my government's policy response," the prime minister said, adding that India has been actively engaging with global leaders as tensions have escalated.

"Since the outbreak of the conflict, I have been in constant touch with global leaders," Modi added.

DAY 30 | WAR WATCH

Indians' safety top priority

Modi said countries in the Gulf are prioritising the safety of Indian nationals during the conflict. "Our embassies are working round the clock to ensure that our brothers and sisters there face no hardship," he added

France denounces Houthis

France condemned on Sunday two attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on Israeli targets, accusing them of escalating tension in the Gulf by entering the war. "Houthis should abstain from all attacks," spokesman Pascal Confavreux said

Iranian strikes at Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan Air Base damaged a US E-3 AWACS aircraft along with a few refuelling aircraft | X

Iran taunts Trump, says waiting for US boots on ground

AGENCIES @ Tehran, Tel Aviv, Dubai

A top Iranian official warned the US against a ground invasion, saying its troops would be set "on fire," as regional diplomats met on Sunday in Pakistan in hopes of opening direct US-Iran talks and ending the month-long war.

Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said Iranian forces were "waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever," according to Iranian state media.

Iran warned of escalation after Israeli airstrikes hit several universities, including ones that Israel claimed were used for nuclear research and development. The paramilitary Revolutionary Guard warned that Iran would consider Israeli universities and branches of US universities in the region "legitimate targets" unless offered safety assurances for Iranian universities, state media reported.

The Israeli military said an impact at an industrial zone may have been caused by missile shrapnel, shortly after it detected a new barrage fired from Iran.

Foreign ministers from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey started talks on the war, with Islamabad acting as a go-between between the United States and Iran. The four-way meeting between the Muslim nations was convened "to review the evolving regional situation and discuss issues of mutual interest", Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a brief statement.

US-Israeli strikes hit the Iranian port city of Bandar Khamir near the Strait of Hormuz, killing five persons, Iranian state media reported. IRNA news agency said four persons were wounded.

Lanka thanks India for fuel supply

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Sunday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for sending an oil shipment to ease fuel supply disruptions in the Island nation caused by the West Asia conflict. A shipment of 38,000 MT of fuel, comprising 20,000 MT of diesel and 18,000 MT of petrol, arrived in Colombo on Saturday P9

Two more Indian ships cross Hormuz

NEW DELHI: Two more Indian-flagged LPG tankers, carrying roughly a day's supply of the country's cooking gas, have safely navigated through the war-hit Strait of Hormuz and are expected to reach Indian shores in the next couple of days. While BW TYR is proceeding towards Mumbai, BW ELM is en route to New Mangalore with an estimated arrival date of April 1

207 taluks stare at drinking water crunch this summer

Four dists to suffer most

Among the 31 districts, the worst-affected taluks are concentrated in Uttara Kannada, Belagavi, Kalaburagi and Tumakuru

High temperatures will adversely affect agriculture. Water scarcity may also force wild animals to enter human habitats, and there could be a rise in the incidence of disease among people

C Govindaraju, professor at the UAS

BK LAKSHMIKANTHA @ Mysuru

SOARING summer temperatures could precipitate a drinking-water crisis across the state. According to the latest report by the State-Level Weather Watch Committee, 207 taluks are expected to face water shortage this summer, while 60 taluks are already in the midst of water scarcity. In addition, 2,258 gram panchayats have been flagged as vulnerable, with 212 panchayats currently experiencing acute water scarcity.

Among the state's 31 districts, the worst-affected taluks are concentrated in Uttara Kannada (12), Belagavi (14), Kalaburagi (11) and Tumakuru (10). At the gram panchayat level, Kalaburagi accounts for 180 affected local bodies, followed by Uttara Kannada (170), Haveri (138), Mandya (130) and Belagavi (126).

To mitigate the crisis, authorities have deployed four departmental water tankers and 56 private tankers. They have also engaged 270 private borewells to sustain supply, from where water is being delivered to 246 villages.

During the peak summer season of March to May, authorities anticipate above-normal maximum temperatures in most parts of the state. Above-normal heatwave days with positive anomalies – ranging from three to six days – are likely over much of the north-interior districts and in select pockets of south-interior Karnataka, including Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Bengaluru Rural and Bengaluru Urban.

Authorities said a transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral conditions is expected in April, with ENSO-neutral conditions likely to prevail through May to July. From June to August, El Niño is expected to emerge (62% chance) and persist at least through the end of 2026.

The shift from a dissipating La Niña phase toward ENSO-neutral conditions is already under way. There is a high likelihood (70%) of El Niño developing between June and September.

Meanwhile, the state faces an elevated risk of "monsoon breaks" – prolonged dry spells – during peak months of July to August with the potential for substantial moisture deficits resulting in below-normal rainfall in the Krishna and Cauvery basins.

CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

Premium FAR still in high court, But city corporations bet on it

Bengaluru: Amid uncertainty over Premium FAR (Floor Area Ratio), all five city corporations have factored it in as a major revenue source, and are aiming to mop up over Rs 2,100 crore. "The Premium FAR issue has been challenged in the Karnataka High Court, and the matter remains sub judice with interim directions, pending final adjudication," experts opine. | P2

Debt-ridden man kills mom, sis before attempting suicide

Bengaluru: A debt-stricken youth allegedly killed his mother and sister, slit the throat of his nephew and tried to end his own life at Mallenahalli near Attibele in Anekal taluk on Saturday night. The accused and the nephew survived and are undergoing treatment. Relatives said continuous harassment by creditors may have pushed the family to take the extreme step | P3

Four children, all cousins, drown in Yadgir

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Yadgir

IN a tragic incident, four children from the same extended family drowned in a pond in an agricultural field at Naganur village in Shorapur taluk of Yadgir district on Sunday.

The deceased are: Kiran (6), son of Mallappa, Basamma (11), daughter of Basappa, and brothers Sharat (6) and Hanumesh (7), sons of Raju. Basamma was the daughter of Raju's brother Basappa. Mallappa is married to the sister of Raju and Basappa.

According to preliminary reports, the children had gone to the farm to play and later entered the pond for swimming. Unaware of the depth, one of the children reportedly slipped and started to drown. In a desperate attempt to rescue each other, the other children entered the pond and all of them drowned one after another.

Shorapur Deputy Superintendent of Police Javeed Inamdar visited the spot. The Kembhavi police registered a case and initiated an investigation to ascertain the exact circumstances that led to the tragedy.

JAMMU RUN

Jammu and Kashmir CM Omar Abdullah participates in Jammu's first-ever international marathon on Sunday | PTI

Oppn cross as U'khand begins audit on status of minorities ahead of polls

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

IN a move that has sparked political tensions, Uttarakhand's BJP-led government has constituted a high-level committee to audit the status of minorities in the state, ahead of next year's Assembly elections and the upcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The seven-member high-level committee will do a comprehensive study of the socioeconomic, educational, and cultural shifts within the minority communities in the state over the last 25 years–essentially since the inception of Uttarakhand.

The committee will be chaired by retired judge Akhilesh Chand Sharma. Other members include retired IAS officer Shatrughan Singh, Doon University Vice-Chancellor Surekha Dangwal, subject expert Manu Gaur, State Minority Commission Vice-Chairperson Farzana Begum, social worker Rajpal Singh, and the Director of the Minority Welfare Department as the member secretary. Speaking to this newspaper, senior committee member and retired IAS officer Shatrughan Singh said, "The committee's work is in progress, and it has already held four meetings."

Pushkar Singh Dhami, Uttarakhand CM

Panel's report to guide future policies: Govt

According to its official mandate, the committee will evaluate the economic and educational status of minorities. It will then prepare a detailed report based on empirical data, which will guide the government's welfare policies

While the government has called it a purely administrative exercise, the Opposition has raised a red flag. "The way the BJP is trying to delete names of people from the Muslim community from the electoral rolls, it appears the government is gathering this data to create a hostile environment and facilitate exploitation," Mohan Kala, spokesperson for the Uttarakhand Congress, alleged, noting the timing is suspect.

The BJP has dismissed the allegations as fear-mongering. Minority welfare minister Khajan Das said the data will allow the government to take informed decisions.

Under a temple, you may find a stupa: Priyank

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

OBLIQUELY referring to the demolition of Babri Masjid and construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya, Karnataka Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge said here on Sunday that a Buddisht 'stupa' could be found if one searched under an ancient temple.

Releasing a book – Karavaliya Charitreyalli Hyder Ali Mattu Tipu Sultan – authored by journalist Naveen Surinje, Kharge said, "If you go deep in search of history, you will get entangled. If you demolish any mosque you may find a temple, if you demolish a temple you will find a stupa. If a stupa is demolished, I don't know.... my limit is 3,500 years of history," he said.

Further analysing history, the minister said Buddhist history was preserved by Denanapriya Ashoka 2,500 years ago, but came to light only 150 years ago.

"Who buried our history? Many don't know Kanishka, Harshavardhana, Gupta and Maurya dynasties, Kharge said.

CONTINUED ON: P4

TMB Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd
Be a step ahead in life
From Tamil Nadu to Karnataka to Gujarat, TMB keeps growing. For you.
With immense pride and gratitude, the Managing Director & CEO, Board of Directors, and Staff of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd., announce the expansion of the TMB family to three new cities, reaffirming our commitment to be where our customers need us most.
621st Anand Branch
620th Ballari Branch
622nd Pandalkudi Branch
Date: 30.03.2026 (Monday) I Time: 10.00 AM
Three new doors. One trusted bank.
620th Branch
Ballari Branch
Sri Basawa Square, Gandhi Nagar 2nd Cross, Ballari -583 101, Karnataka.
621st Branch
Anand Branch
Plot No. 417,Shop No. G/4, G/5, G/6, Ground Floor, Radhasoami Sulay, Opp. Fire Station, Sardar Gunj, Baliyadev Chowkdi, Vyayam Shala Road, Anand – 388 001, Gujarat.
622nd Branch
Pandalkudi Branch
No. 8/139 A3, Sooranayakkanpatti Street, Pandalkudi, Virudhunagar District – 626 113, Tamilnadu.
456 DEPOSIT SCHEME
Tenor: 456 Days
Senior Citizens Earn 7.50% P.A
General Citizens Earn - 7.10%* P.A
TMB bank Your Bank on Mobile
SCAN TO INVEST
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BENGALURU

02 BENGALURU | MONDAY 30.03.2026 | newindianexpress.com

ALMANAC TODAY

- **Monday:** 30.03.2026
- **Year:** Parabhava
- **Ayana:** Uttharayana
- **Ritu:** Vasantha
- **Masa:** Chaitra
- **Paksha:** Sukla
- **Tithi:** Dwadasi 7.12 am
- **Nakshatra:** Makha 2.48 pm
- **Moon in Kanya Rashi**
- **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am
- **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm
- **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER

MIN 21°C | MAX 33°C

FORECAST Cloudy

Sunrise 06.17 am
Sunset 06.31 pm
Moonrise 04.21 pm
Moonset 04.16 am

Premium FAR still in high court, But city corporations bet on it

Civic bodies include it in their budgets as a major revenue source; Demand for TDRs dips

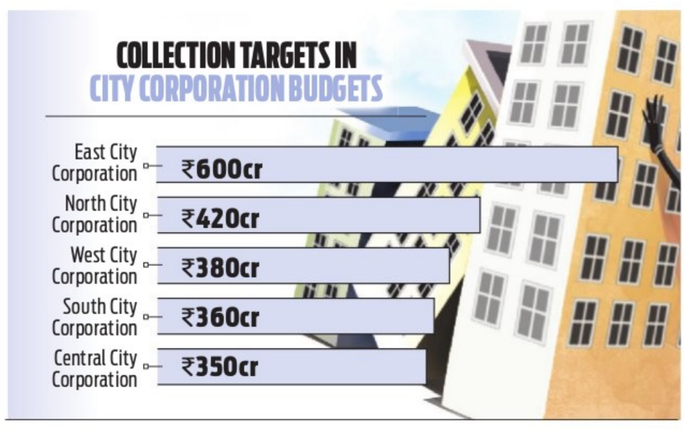
AKNISREE KARTHIK @ Bengaluru

AMID uncertainty over Premium FAR (Floor Area Ratio), all five city corporations have factored it in as a major revenue source, and are aiming to mop up over Rs 2,100 crore. "The Premium FAR issue has been challenged in the Karnataka High Court, and the matter remains sub judice with interim directions, pending final adjudication," experts opine.

They say that already 'Akrama Sakrama', which regularises illegal property construction, is in the Supreme Court, and questioned the basis on which the corporations have bet big on Premium FAR, laying down plans for developmental works with the revenue generated.

"The projected Premium FAR revenue of Rs 2,110 crore shows the scale of dependence. It is being positioned not merely as a planning tool, but as a core revenue stream for the corporations," said advocate Prashanth Mirle.

"PFAR has been challenged in the High Court, and the matter remains sub judice with interim directions in place, pending final adjudication. Therefore, when the very policy framework is under judicial scrutiny, the public is entitled to ask on what basis these income assumptions have been made, and what contingency mechanisms exist if such receipts do not materialise," Mirle said.



He said the issue of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) exposes both market and fiscal risks, and that existing TDR holders are already facing delays in issuances and reduced demand due to the introduction of PFAR, affecting landowners who have surrendered land and builders who rely on predictable development instruments.

Civic activist and founder-member of Bengaluru Praja Vedike, NS Mukunda, said, "According to the road width, Premium FAR allows people to build additional floors. A building's foundation is laid in accordance with the number of floors built, and adding more floors is a recipe for disaster. Before introducing any policies like this, the civic body should have ideally carried out multiple tests, including soil tests, to know if it is feasible to allow addition of more floors."

"Also, TDR holders are left in the lurch. Developers are not going behind TDR holders, as they are adding floors by paying Premium FAR fee to the government. So what happens to the TDRs issued?" Mukunda asked.

"At a larger level, if road widening and infrastructure projects are not executed through TDR mechanisms, corporations will be compelled to undertake direct land acquisition by paying compensation," Mirle said.

"In a scenario where financial resources are already constrained or landowners are unwilling to opt for TDR, this shifts the entire burden onto public finances. Ultimately, this not only impacts project execution timelines but also increases costs that are passed on to end-users, raising serious concerns about sustainability and planning coherence," he added.

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner M Maheswar Rao said the state government, after taking into consideration all aspects, has introduced Premium FAR, and provisions have been made for it in the budget. "Some submissions related to Premium FAR are there. We will argue our contentions and let the courts decide," he said.

He added that the population of Bengaluru is expected to cross 2.5 crore by 2045, and Premium FAR is needed to match the city's growth. Rao said they should not create third-party rights under Premium FAR and have not stopped issuing TDR.

What is Premium FAR?

Premium FAR is the additional built-up area people can acquire over and above the permissible FAR, by paying a premium charge to the government. It is a move aimed at facilitating higher-density developments and optimal utilisation of high-value land within Bengaluru city limits.

IMMERSED IN DEVOTION

Devotees participate in a special ritual being performed on the fifth day of Bengaluru Karaga at Dharmaraya Swamy Temple in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

SHAKTI SCHEME

BMTC yet to get ₹850cr from govt

INDRA S @ Bengaluru

THE Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) is staring at a significant financial gap caused by the state government's Shakti scheme – it has suffered a shortfall of around Rs 850 crore, as the government has reimbursed only Rs 2,247.35 crore out of the Rs 3,097.27 crore it was to get for providing free bus rides to women passengers.

Until February 2026, the scheme launched almost three years ago recorded 680.87 crore free bus rides by women across Karnataka, of which 217.62 crore were offered by the BMTC. The figures were disclosed in response to a question raised by MLC HS Gopinath in the Legislative Council recently, which sought details of the total free bus rides taken by women and the reimbursement of ticket fares by the government. Year-wise figures show that while the financial burden has steadily increased, reimbursements have not kept pace.

The government acknowledged that the BMTC was already under financial stress, with liabilities amounting to Rs 1,383.86 crore prior to the scheme's rollout. Pending payments to fuel companies, provident fund obligations and supplier dues had compounded the situation. In addition, rising diesel prices, staff salary revisions and increasing maintenance costs added to the operational burden in the subsequent period, the Council was told.

In response, the government said it has been releasing funds in advance every month under the Shakti scheme, with allocations for the period up to March 2026. To stabilise the BMTC's finances, several measures have been undertaken, including permitting the corporation to raise Rs 589.20 crore in loans with state guarantee and providing budgetary support for repayment, it said.

The government also highlighted its efforts to expand and modernise the fleet, including the induction of diesel and electric buses, and the approval for the purchase of 4,500 electric buses under the PM e-Drive scheme. An additional 1,000 diesel buses have been announced in the 2026–27 Budget.

While the Shakti scheme has significantly boosted public transport usage among women, the data points to growing concerns over the financial sustainability of transport corporations, particularly the BMTC, amid rising ridership and operational costs.

AIDSO slams change in SSLC language policy while exams on

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state committee of the All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) has criticised the state government's recent decision not to include the marks for the third language in the SSLC examination and introduce a grading system for the paper. The move effectively makes the third language not compulsory for passing the examination and reduces the total marks to 525, it said.

The organisation said the decision appears to be a step towards implementing a bilingual policy in the state, a demand long raised by language and education experts. The AIDSO also objected to the timing and manner of the announcement, noting that it was made in the middle of the examination process.

The AIDSO termed the move "undemocratic" and said introducing policies in the name of students' welfare without discussions could set a precedent for decisions that may be detrimental to the community. It also expressed concern that changes were made at the end of the academic year without consulting teachers and parents.

The organisation reiterated its support for a bilingual policy that includes the mother tongue and English, but urged the government to adopt a consultative approach involving all stakeholders.

EXPRESS READ

Work on Purple Line section causes delays

Bengaluru: Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) temporarily suspended services on a section of the Purple Line on Sunday morning due to scheduled maintenance work, affecting early commuters along the busy corridor for 45 minutes. The BMRCL made the announcement only after the maintenance began, leaving little time for commuters to make alternative arrangements. Officials said services on other stretches of the Purple Line continued as usual during this period. Operations on the Green Line and Yellow Line were not affected and ran normally. Services on the affected stretch resumed as scheduled after the maintenance work was completed. **ENS**

South City Corpn holds adoption drive for strays

Bengaluru: The Animal Husbandry department of the Bengaluru South City Corporation on Sunday held an adoption drive for stray dogs at Shalini Grounds in Jayanagar. Ten puppies were adopted at the event, aimed to promote the protection and rehabilitation of stray dogs in the area. Besides aiming to control the city's stray dog population, the drive also sought to change the current public perception about stray dogs as a menace. All stray dogs brought to the event, most of them puppies, were dewormed and vaccinated. The organisers urged people to adopt stray dogs instead of "shopping" for pets. **ENS**

CORPORATIONS TO PURCHASE 158 PROPERTIES FROM TAX DEFAULTERS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AFTER exhausting all available options to recover property tax dues from defaulters, the city corporations have initiated steps to purchase 158 defaulted properties. Those with the highest dues and which have not found any bidders in auctions (distress sale), will be taken over by the corporations at a pre-determined upset price (linked to guidance value).

There are 52 such properties under Bengaluru South City Corporation, 55 under West Corporation and 51 in East Corporation, according to press release from the three Corporations.

Corporations said chronic defaulters were issued repeated notices, property attachments warnings and public auction notices, and that there was no response from the owners. In cases where all recovery measures have been exhausted and auctions failed repeatedly, the city corporations will purchase the defaulted property at the notified upset price.

After purchase of such properties and recovering pending property tax, penalties, interest and administrative costs, the remaining amount would be transferred to the owners. The properties will vest with the city corporations free of encumbrances, and ownership records will be updated.

As a final option, corporations said they would give a one-month window to clear all dues, and if payment is made, the takeover process will be withdrawn and the property restored.

PM Modi lauds Bengaluru-based Prayoga Institute in Mann Ki Baat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the Bengaluru-based Prayoga Institute of Education Research and its Anveshana programme in the latest episode of Mann Ki Baat on Sunday, underlining the importance of research-led learning at the school level.

Speaking about the initiative, the PM said, "This team has a special focus on research projects and is working to popularise science education at the school level. Through Anveshana, students from Classes 9 to 12 get opportunities to explore areas like chemistry, earth sciences and wellness. This gives students valuable research experience and also a platform to publish their work."

On students' fear of science, he said, "Some students told me they want to study science but feel afraid of it. Efforts like these help them connect with science and encourage them to learn hands on. When we try something ourselves, curiosity and interest develop naturally."

The Anveshana programme engages students in guided scientific research under mentorship, enabling hands-on learning beyond textbooks. Since its launch in 2022, it has supported several student-led projects, some of which have been published in international peer-reviewed journals.

In a Karnataka-specific instance, four rural students associated with the programme conducted research on sustainable synthesis of copper oxide nanoparticles using plant-based extracts. Their work was published in an international journal and they were later felicitated by the state government.

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHIS

30th March : New Mood for Venus Love came in like a wrecking ball when Venus was in Aries. We pursued it directly, and the attractions were sudden and dramatic, sometimes burning out just as suddenly. Today's Venus change marks the start of a new energy for love -- slower, more sensual and secure. Taurus is ruled by Venus, so this placement is a comfy home of relaxed enjoyment.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Love and connection matter most today. You may even change your schedule around to honor the order of things. Your priorities reflect your heart, and your loved ones feel it, see it and know it by where, how and when you show up.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 - May 20)
To force yourself to do what you don't want to do is an unsustainable model. It might work once or twice, but you'll rebel soon enough. Instead, build in some luscious rewards as strong motivators to follow through with your intentions.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)
Laughter and other underrated delights are in store today, and you'll gravitate to those who bring out the lighter side in others. You can find them in ordinary places where people feel free to be themselves.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
People trying to prove their power may not believe they are powerful deep down. The truly competent don't usually need to advertise it constantly. Watch out for the red flag of overcompensation.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)
You remember both the positive and the negative about a situation, and you're still sorting through the complex mix of associated emotions. This gives you options that a more limited person doesn't have.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
Not every interaction will leave you energized, but healthy relationships involve some form of exchange: support, laughter, learning or shared understanding. If you consistently walk away from someone feeling depleted, pause and reflect on what might need attention.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23)
Happiness is difficult to define and nearly impossible to measure, yet it remains a worthy aim. Without it, the other things we can count don't count for much. Today, your attractions, impulses and appetites are hinting at what might make you happy, and you're paying attention.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21)
You don't want to ruffle any feathers or say anything that might make people feel awkward, but you're still deciding who to trust. A little more information will help. Ask your questions. People who mean well are usually glad to clear things up.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
Double up on your gratitude practice today because appreciation multiplies exponentially what it focuses on. When you notice what is working, people and circumstances offer more of it, as though attention itself were a kind of invitation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
People assume you're all discipline and strategy, but today reveals another advantage: you know how to play the long game. What looks like patience to others is actually quiet confidence that the payoff is already on its way.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
Your originality is not a side effect; it's the main feature. While others try to blend in or follow the script, you wander off and invent a better one. The people who appreciate brilliance will recognize it immediately.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - Mar 20)
Your imagination is not escapism; it's reconnaissance. The visible world is a work in progress. You keep noticing possibilities floating just beneath the surface. Follow the most intriguing one to discover something beautiful before anyone else does.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

9	8		7	4		1		5
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8		7				3		2
	5	4	9				7	
					5	7		
		6	1		2			8
5		8		9	7		1	4

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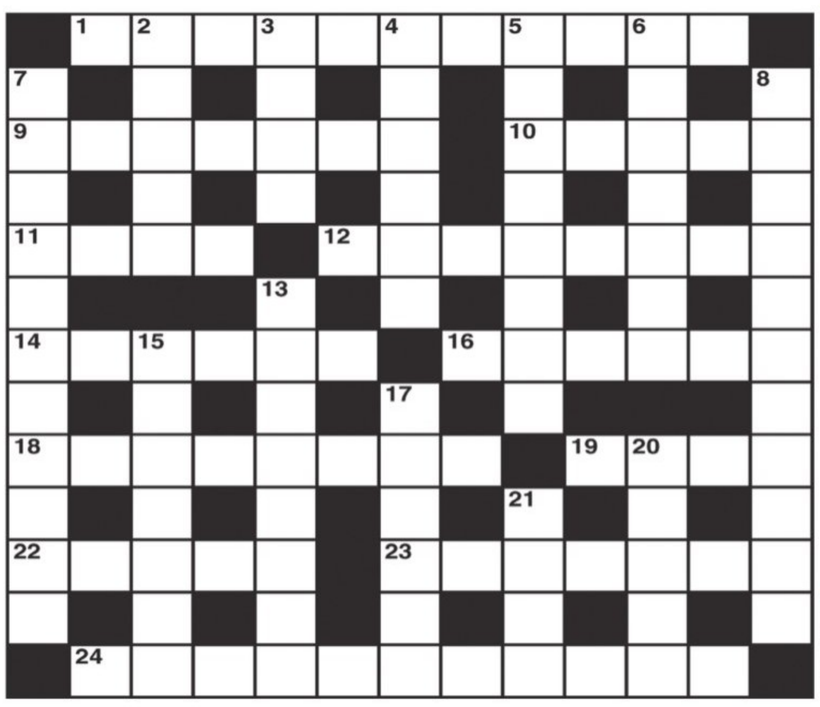
8	3	2	5	7	6	4	1	9
1	5	4	2	9	8	3	6	7
6	4	7	8	5	2	9	3	1
3	2	8	9	6	1	7	5	4
5	9	1	7	3	4	8	2	6

SUDOKU EASY

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS

1 Clubs maybe where admirals may be seen? (11)
9 Offer - or wait for a better offer (4,3)
10 A little hooter (5)
11 How much, say, is a unit of power? (4)
12 For Wagnerian hero standard fails unexpectedly (8)
14 In a wood there's a female angler (6)
16 Educational measure? (6)
18 Scholarly in theory (8)
19 High spot of getting married in a church (4)
22 Doctor, I have reduced energy (5)
23 Pitch of the roof? (7)
24 History teachers who are real experts? (4,7)

DOWN

2 Left out until rewritten (5)
3 African goes up into space (4)
4 Right sort of taxes without added charges (6)
5 It's close to home or posted a little way out (8)
6 Necessitate having to collect? (4,3)
7 A decisive manual exhibition (4,2,5)
8 Didn't miss any of the athletics meeting, anyway (2,3,6)
13 Submissive; always coming up with regular payment (8)
15 It's a man in distress. This may keep him going (7)
17 Not a bird; it chirps and flies (6)
20 A rich sort of job for a professor (5)
21 Catch sight of a pimple (4)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Friend, 4 Landlord, 9 Oracle, 10 Accuracy, 12 Peer, 13 Plumb, 14 Cute, 17 Miscalculate, 20 Out of service, 23 Okay, 24 Sweet, 25 Face, 28 Overpaid, 29 Strict, 30 Reporter, 31 Frayed.

Down: 1 Foot pump, 2 In a sense, 3 Nile, 5 Accomplished, 6 Drum, 7 Opaque, 8 Dryden, 11 Black on white, 15 Nahum, 16 Start, 18 Vitality, 19 Dejected, 21 Colour, 22 Make up, 26 Spar, 27 Stir.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

VOSEH

SRIYK

LAOEIG

SOLTEC

I can't believe I'm going to be on the cover of Le Grand Fromage Magazine!
Well, on three, how about a big smile?
WHEN TAKING PHOTOS OF THE BRIE, CHEDDAR, ETC., THE PHOTOGRAPHER JOKINGLY SAID ---

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: HOUSE GLINT CHOSEN BISHOP
Answer: When a head cold and a traffic jam slowed her down, the result was — CONGESTION

Just as the Indian Premier League began this year, Hubballi-Dharwad police uploaded a video on various social media platforms raising awareness among people to keep them away from betting. An officer said youths, especially students, get lured into this illegal activity out of greed to make quick money

Youth in debt kills mom, sis before suicide bid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A debt-stricken youth allegedly murdered his mother and sister, slit the throat of his nephew and tried to end his own life at Mallenahalli, near Attibele in Anekal taluk on Saturday night. The accused and the nephew, who survived the attack, are undergoing treatment.

The accused, Mohan MR (27), killed his mother Asha (55) and sister Varshitha (34) and then slit the throat of his11-year-old nephew Mayank. Mohan and Mayank were found with severe injuries and were rushed to a private hospital in Attibele.

The police said the crime took place around 10.30 pm. Continuous harassment by creditors may have pushed the family to take the extreme step, relatives said. Before the horrific incident, Mohan, who is reportedly under severe financial stress, recorded a video on Saturday night expressing his intent to end his life and shared it with his relatives. Alarmed, family members rushed to their house and broke open the door. Asha and Varshitha were unresponsive, while Mohan and Mayank were found grievously injured. The duo was immediately shifted to the hospital, and the police were alerted.

The preliminary investigation suggested that Mohan, who was deep in debt because of his chit fund activities, may have attacked the family with a knife and slit their throats before attempting to take his own life. The police said Varshitha was wheelchair-bound and was reportedly battling brain tumour.

The police said both survivors are critical and in emergency care. The Attibele police booked Mohan for murder and the people whom he owed money to, for abetment of suicide. Further investigation is under way to ascertain the exact sequence of events and circumstances leading to the incident.

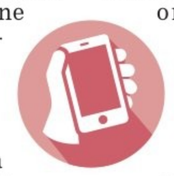
SURPRISE INSPECTION

Cellphones seized in central prison, 3 staffers suspended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

POLICE have registered a case against five undertrial prisoners for allegedly using mobile phones inside the Bengaluru Central Prison in Parappana Agrahara. Also, three prison staff have been suspended for dereliction of duty in connection with the incident.

The inmates had allegedly video-recorded the usage of mobile phones inside the prison and had circulated the videos, claiming that one of the phones were provided to them by a top-ranking official in the prison department.



According to the FIR registered at Parappana Agrahare police station, the incident took place between 11.47 pm on Friday and 12.53 am on Saturday in tower 01 of the undertrial prisoners' section. Inmates allegedly recorded videos on mobile phones to oppose a new system of barrack allocation based on alphabetical order and circulated them outside, purportedly to defame the prison administration.

The inmates named in the complaint include Jibson Daniel, Sanjeev, Manoj S, Abhishek R, and Gokul Shivananda.

A surprise inspection conducted on Saturday by the prison authorities led to the seizure of nine mobile phones, six SIM cards, earphones, earpods, and a charger from the barrack.

A senior prisons official said three video clips surfaced on Saturday morning. "Our team identified those responsible and recovered the phones hidden inside a pipe in the toilet chamber," the official added.

The official added that the act was aimed at disrupting ongoing prison reforms, including the new barrack allocation system.

He also added that the main accused persons in the case are Darshan and Abhishek, who were involved in the Hennur Bande murder case two and a half years ago.

Though Darshan's name is not mentioned in the FIR as he was not present in that barrack, investigations established his role in the case.

Three warders — Niranjan Kamath, Hanumantappa Hadpad and Shivanand Karlabatti — have been suspended. A case has been registered under the Karnataka Prisons (Amendment) Act, 2022.

More than 10 mobiles stolen during IPL match

Cricket enthusiasts who had come to the M Chinnaswamy Stadium to witness the IPL match between RCB and SRH on Saturday night lost more than 10 mobile phones. The police said that more than 10 persons have come forward reporting mobile phone thefts at Gate no. 3 of the stadium and they have generated e-lost reports through the KSP mobile application. "It is suspected that pickpockets have done this taking advantage of the crowd. We are verifying the CCTV footage to trace the thieves," the police said.

FAKE ENTRIES, EXPERIENCE

Spl court nod for trial against railway officer

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

THE Special Court for CBI Cases has ruled that the corruption trial against M Ravindranath Reddy, Principal Chief Safety Officer of South Central Railway, Secunderabad, can proceed since there are incriminating material against him.

Manjunath Sangreshi, Principal Special Judge for CBI Cases, on March 25 rejected the application filed by Reddy seeking discharge from the case of corruption in the awarding of Mysuru-Ramanagaram Doubling Work. According to the prosecution, Reddy, who is the accused No.1, and accused Nos. 2 to 6 worked in South Western Railway (SWR), at a relevant point in time and accused No.7, a private person, who is one of the partners of M/s Krishi Infratech, which is engaged in Railway works.

The Construction Department of the SWR had awarded several tenders from 2011 to 2018 to B'uru-based Krishi Infratech. While awarding these tenders, the applicant, who was the then Chief Engineer (Constructions), SWR, Cantonment, Bengaluru, and other accused persons entered into a criminal conspiracy with Suryanarayana Reddy, and awarded the tender to Krishi Infratech by flouting the norms. For awarding the tender of Mysuru-Ramanagaram Doubling Work, the eligibility criteria were that the tenderer should have completed the execution of a minimum quantity of 19,640 Cubic Meters (CUM) blanketing in a similar work.

But the applicant, by entering into criminal conspiracy with the then Deputy Chief Engineer Mallasidda Banasode, who is accused No.2, obtained false work experience certificates for the same and thereby made Krishi Infratech eligible for the tender and finally awarded the tender. Fake entries were made in the measurement book in support of a fake experience certificate and utilised the same for making payment to the tune of Rs 77.84 lakh to the firm for unexecuted work, causing loss to the railways.

Therefore, the CBI registered the case against them in 2020 under the provisions of the IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act and filed the charge sheet against them. The applicant claimed that he had no role to play in the making of the alleged purported fake entries, and hence, there is no prima facie material for the alleged offences invoked against him.

COOLING SHOWER

Though the rain brought relief from the scorching heat, it left several unsuspecting people in Bengaluru drenched on Sunday night | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

DRIVING WRONG WAY, SPEEDING CAR KILLS TWO

BENGALURU: Two scooter riders, Zubair Ahmed (42) and Abdul Musabir (16), both residents of Frazer Town, were killed after a speeding car rammed into their vehicle in the High Grounds traffic police limits in the early hours of Sunday. The accident occurred at 2.20am near Chandrika Hotel Circle when Ahmed was returning home with the boy after work. The car, speeding on the one-way from Balekundri Circle towards Miller's Road, was supposed to take a right turn onto Miller's Road. But it continued straight in the wrong direction, and collided with the scooter. Both victims sustained severe injuries and died on the way to hospital. The police have registered a case.

Lecturer's burnt body found; cops suspect murder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

THE burnt body of a college lecturer was found in an areca-nut plantation in Hanumanthapura, Shivamogga on Sunday. The deceased, Suresh Kumar was a lecturer at Akshara College. Superintendent of Police Nikhil B said the case is being treated as a suspected murder based on preliminary findings.

Suresh had left his house on Saturday, telling family members he was going to attend a wedding. His body was discovered the next morning in his own plantation. Police said the area around the body was still smouldering when officers reached the spot. A two-wheeler and a bag believed to belong to the victim were recovered from the scene. The body was completely charred, raising suspicion of homicide, police said. The victim's mobile phone has been seized and will be sent for forensic analysis. Authorities said the exact cause of death will be determined after the postmortem examination.

Family members have not named suspects so far. Police said they are probing all possible angles. A scene-of-crime team has inspected the site, and a special team led by an inspector has been formed to investigate the case.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to General Public that my client Sri. Muralidhara. G. K., presently residing at Bangalore, has lost the original sale deed dated 19/11/2010, executed by Sri. Mohammed Shaffi, in favour of Smt. Gayathri. D. M, registered as document no. JAL-1-02766-2010-2011, Book I, Stored in CD no. JALD81, on 19/11/2010, in the office of Sub-Registrar, Jala, with respect to selling the Northern portion of Site No. 12 measuring 600 Sq., ft., which is related to the schedule property morefully described below.

If found inform to Smt. B. Mallika, Advocate, whose address is mentioned as below, within eight days from the date of publication.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY/ SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of vacant immovable property bearing Site No. 12, formed out of Assessment no. 103, situated at Kattigenahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, Presently comes under the limits of Bangalore North City Corporation, Ward No. 05, Site measuring East to West: 40-0 feet and North to South: 30-0 feet, totally measuring 1200 Sq., ft., and bounded on:

Boundaries:-
East by : Road;
West by : Private Property;
North by : Site No. 11, belonging to Sri. K. Manjunath;
South by : Site No. 13.

MALLIKA.B Advocate
No.19, Ground Floor, 1st'E'Cross, J. S. Nagar, Nandinilayout, Bangalore- 560 096. Ph: 9742658187

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public are hereby notified that, my clients have agreed to purchase the Schedule property from its owners: **Y.S.JYOTHIDEVI W/o Late Shashikumar.M and her children Sri.M.S.AJAYPRASAD and Sri.M.S.ABHAYACHANDRA**, residing at: No.115/10, Sharadhi, 15th Cross Road, Opp.Poornima Clinic, Vyalikaval, Bengaluru – 560 003.

Apart from the said owners, if any other person/s have any manner of right, title and or interest or claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for sale of the Schedule Property by the aforesaid owners, they are hereby called upon to file their objection/s in writing, along with the photocopies of documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.20/01 (CITB/BDA Site No.369), PID No.53-5-20/01, having E-PID No.1354150711, measuring East to West 56 ft and North to South 31 ft, in all measuring 1736 Sq.ft, with an old house thereon comprised of ground and first floors, situated at 5th Main Road, Srinagar, Banashankari 1st Stage, 1st Block, Bangalore-560050 and bounded on:

East by : Property bearing No.430
West by : Road
North by : Property bearing No.370
South by : Road

Sd/- S.F. GOUTAM CHAND, Advocate
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES,
No.60, 2nd Floor, Old Kanakapura Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru - 560004

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IN THE COURT OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore-560 001
O.A. No. 973/2025

Between: HDFC Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
:AND:
SRI. RAJ NARAYANAN M ...Defendants

To,
1. SRI. RAJ NARAYANAN M
S/o Sri. Kottapurathgovindankutty, Aged About 40 Years, Mathrusuppillygokulam House, Mulakunnathukavu Kerela-680581 Post, Trichur,
Also At: Sri. Raj Narayanan M,
S/o Sri. Kottapurathgovindankutty, Aged About 40 years, 1733, Pc 130 Dubai Azaiba, Sultanate Of Oman, Muscat, Arb, Oman
And Also At: Sri. Raj Narayanan M, S/O Sri. Kottapurathgovindankutty, Aged About 40 Years, Middle East Wealths Llc, Po Box 1733, Pc 130, Muscat, Arab, Sultanate Of Oman, Oman
Also At: Sri. Raj Narayanan M, S/o Sri Kottapurath Govindankutty, Aged About 40 Years, Ozone Urbana Belvedre, A-F Blks, Flat-D-203 Floor Second, Sy. No. 87/2 & 88/2, Kannamangala Village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru-562110

2. Ozone Urbana Infra Developers Pvt. Ltd., Represented By It Authorised Signtory, Haivng Its Registered Office At No 38 Ulsoor Road, Bangalore-560042

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT UNDER RULE 23 (Viii) OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

WHEREAS the applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions, Act, 1993, against the above defendants for the recovery of sum of Rs. 42,07,837/- (Rupees Forty Two Lakhs Seven Thousand Eight Hundred And Thirty Seven Only) amount together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.

The above defendant is therefore, hereby directed to before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or through authorized agents in support of their defence to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **21-05-2026 at 10:30 a.m.** as why the relief's prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this day of 27-2-2026.

BY THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
Sd/- REGISTRAR
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BANGALORE

Your Guide to Spicy living
INDULGE
Every Friday with THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the original sale deed bearing No. 2941/1991, Book I, dated : 1/11/1991 has been misplaced while travelling on Adugodi Main Road. The document belongs to Ms. Divya Deepa and Ms. Shalini, (Owners) daughters of B. Bhagappa Billar, residing at no.16, Anjaneya Temple Street, 6th Cross, Bangalore 560047. The Owners have lodged a complaint before the Adugodi Police Station. Finders may please handover the document at the aforesaid address.

IN THE COURT OF THE 11th ADDL. DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE BENGALURU RURAL DISTRICT AT BENGALURU (COMMERCIAL COURT)
COM. O.S. No. 90 OF 2026

BETWEEN: V. MUNIRAJU ...PLAINTIFF
AND : M/s. CMRS ENTERPRISES, a partnership Firm Rep/by its duly authorised Managing Partner Mr.Chennam Rangaswamy and others ...**DEFENDANTS**

SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANTS No. 1 TO 3

1. M/s. CMRS ENTERPRISES. a partnership Firm having its office at No.600, 2nd Floor, C Block, Brook Filed, Bengaluru - 56 0 037.
Rep/by its duly authorised Managing Partner Mr. Chennam Rangaswamy S/o. Late C. Rangaiah aged about 48 years, Residing at No.H-108. Sri Rama Spurthi AECS Layout, Brook Filed, Bengaluru - 560 037.

2. M/s VENKATESHWARA ESTATE A firm having present office at No.56, 2nd Floor, 5th Main, Kodigehalli HAL II Stage, Bengaluru - 560 008. Rep/by its partners M/s Mr. Gudipaty Srinivasa Reddy and Mr. C.H. Mallikharjun.

3. M/s. CMRS ENTERPRISES, NOW CHANGED TO M/s. AUSTINE ROLLS INDIA PROPERTIES a partnership Firm having its office at No.202, 3rd Floor, Halasahalli Main Road, behind Varthur Police Station, Bengaluru-560 087.
AND ALSO RESIDING AT Office No. 32/33, Ground Floor, East Park Road, 16th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore-560055. Rep/by Mr. Manjunath.C und Mrs. Chaithra G. Mallya.

You are here by informed that the above said Defendants have filed the above petition against you for the relief of Damages and Declaration in respect of the converted for residential purpose vide official memorandum No.SLN.EVH.SR.287.14-15 dated 25.03.2015, with BBMP Khatha No. 1616-93/4-179 situated within BBMP Ward No. 149, Varthur, measuring 9.10 Guntas in Sy.No. 93/4 of Varthur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk. Since the Defendants whose last addresses are furnished herein above are residing in the said address, but are evading to receive the Summons sent by this Honorable Court. This Summons are published as per the order of the Honorable Court dated **27.03.2026.** Hence you are hereby informed to take Summons of the above case and the above case is posted **on 21.04.2026 at 11.00 AM** for your appearance in person or through the counsel, failing which matter will be heard Ex Parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this 28th day March 2026.

By Order of the Court, Senior Sheristedar, Commercial Court, Bengaluru (R) Dist, III Floor, Telephone House, Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru-01.
Advocate for plaintiff : **K.V. Ravi,** Advocate No. 1, STB Complex, Near Court, Attibele Road, Anekal Town, Bangalore.

GMDC
Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of Gujarat Enterprise)
FUELING THE GROWTH

GMDC, One of India's Leading Mining PSUs
Invites RFP for
Selection of an Agency for the Identification of Technically Suitable Land for a Mineral Processing Plant and Its Related Ancillary Infrastructure for the Copper Project at Ambaji, Gujarat, India

RFP No.: GMDC/PP&D/009/2025-26

Submission Deadline 4th May 2026, 15:00 Hrs IST | **For More Information Visit** www.gmdcltd.com

Khanij Bhavan, 132 Feet Ring Road, Near University Ground, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad - 380 052, Gujarat, India.

DOCUMENTS LOST

I, **Vikas Saryal**, Residing at No. 402, Sri Murari Grand, Aishwarya Crystal Layout, Basapura, Bengaluru - 560 100, I had lost/misplaced my **Sale Agreement Document, Document Identification No. 2271/16-17.**
Inspite of best efforts I could not trace the same and in this regard I had lodged online complaint before Police Unit, Bengaluru City, vide Lost Report No. 1963098/2025, Serial No. 1963098, Dated : 17/12/2025.
If anybody finds the above said document or is in possession, please handover the same to the above said address or contact me on **7829491658**

Bharat Coking Coal Limited
(A Mini Ratna Comnany)
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

All the tenders issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (B.C.C.L.) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of **B.C.C.L. "www.bcclweb.in"** Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal **"https://coalindiatenders.nic.in"** and Central Public Procurement Portal **"https://eprocure.gov.in"** In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **"https://gem.gov.in".** This is applicable to all Open (Domestic / Global) Tenders issued through e-procurement portal of CIL.

This information is also available on BCCL website www.bcclweb.in

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru-560 020

No.: BDA/EM/EE(ID)/TEN/207/2025-26 Date: 30.03.2026

INVITING FOR TENDER (IFT)

(Through GoK e-Procurement platform https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)

Bangalore Development Authority is inviting tender for below mentioned work:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx. cost Rs. in Crores	EMD Rs. in Croes	Tender Processing Fee	Period of completion
1	Construction of Bangalore Business Corridor (Peripheral Ring Road-1) Package-1 from Tumkur Road to Bellary Road (Km 0+0000) to (Km 19.80) inclusive of 10 year O&M on Design, Build, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) mode. (Indent Number: BDA/2025-26/RD/ WORK_INDENT237)	3348.05	33.50	As per Karnataka Public Procurement Portal	36 months

Tender Schedule: (1) Tender published date: **06.04.2026. (2)** Last date and time for tender queries is **15.04.2026, 16.00 hrs. (3)** Last date and time for receipt of tenders: **04.05.2026, 16.00 hrs. (4)** Date and time of opening Technical bid: **06.05.2026, 16.30 hrs. (5)** Date and time of opening Finanial bid: **11.05.2026, 16.30 hrs.** Interested bidders can view further details on **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and for more details it is requested to contact the Infrastructure Division of BDA during office hours. Helpline / Whatsapp: 9483166622 (24x7) @BDAOfficialGok

Note: The implementation of the project on lands that are subject matter of various writ petitions pending in the Hon. High Court of Karnataka is subject to the outcome of such writ petitions.

Sd/- Engineer Member

JANA SMALL FINANCE BANK (A Scheduled Commercial Bank) | **Registered Office: The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 & 12/2B, Off Domlur, Koramangla Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071.**

DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF SARFAESI ACT, 2002.

Whereas you the below mentioned Borrower's, Co-Borrower's, Guarantor's and Mortgagors have availed loans from **Jana Small Finance Bank Limited,** by mortgaging your immovable properties. Consequent to default committed by you all, your loan account has been classified as **Non-performing Asset,** whereas **Jana Small Finance Bank Limited** being a secured creditor under the Act, and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with rule 2 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued **Demand notice** calling upon the Borrower's/ Co-Borrower's/ Guarantor's/ Mortgagors as mentioned in column No.2 to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with future interest thereon within **60 days** from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served on some of them for various reasons.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Mortgagor	Loan Account No. & Loan Amount	Details of the Security to be enforced	Date of NPA & Demand Notice date	Amount Due in Rs. / as on
1	1) Mr. Ganesh Babu G, S/o. Late N Gopalappa, 2) Mrs. Geetha. L, W/o. Ganesh Babu G	Loan Account No. 45389430000753 Loan Amount: Rs.35,50,466/-	**Mortgaged Immovable Property:** All that piece and parcel of the property bearing old Katha No.23/2356/2201, New Katha No.23/2356/2201/1, situated at 1st Division, 4th Ward, Grandhige Beedi, Devanahalli Town, Bangalore Rural District bounded Measuring East to West 65 feet and North to South 15 feet Total 975 sq.feet **Bounded on the: East by:** TMC Road, **West by:** Lakshmanachar's Property, **North by:** Grandige Venugopal's property, **South by:** N Krishna's property.	Date of NPA: 08-01-2026 Demand Notice Date: 27-03-2026	Rs.37,98,874.92 (Rupees Thirty Seven Lakhs Ninety Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Four and Ninety Two Paisa Only) due as on 22-03-2026

Notice is therefore given to the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor & Mortgagor as mentioned in Column No.2, calling upon them to make payment of the aggregate amount as shown in column No.6, against all the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower within **60 days** of Publication of this notice as the said amount is found payable in relation to the respective loan account as on the date shown in Column No. 6. It is made clear that if the aggregate amount together with future interest and other amounts which may become payable till the date of payment, is not paid, **Jana Small Finance Bank Limited** shall be constrained to take appropriate action for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described in Column No.4. Please note that this publication is made without prejudice to such rights and remedies as are available to **Jana Small Finance Bank Limited** against the Borrower's/ Co-Borrower's/ Guarantor's/ Mortgagors of the said financials under the law, you are further requested to note that as per section 13(13) of the said act, you are restrained/ prohibited from disposing of or dealing with the above security or transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise of the secured asset without prior consent of Secured Creditor.

Date: 28.03.2026, Place: Bangalore Rural **Sd/- Authorised Officer, For Jana Small Finance Bank Limited**

BIG PICTURE

PLAYING WITH FIRE

HOW TO TAME FOREST FIRES

Forest fires are far from a natural phenomenon. The spark is often lit by an absent mind and hidden hands. The humongous social, environmental and economic cost of these avoidable mishaps should make state forest authorities redouble their efforts to douse the flames with active involvement of the local populace

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @ Karwar

EVERY summer, the Karnataka forest department is on its toes to douse forest fires, especially in protected zones. Flora and fauna become ritual offerings. Forest fires have economic, social and environmental impact, and the forest department has a long way to go to make it a fire-free year in the state.

According to scientists, human activities are responsible for 75 per cent of forest fires. Forests Minister Eshwar Khandre told the Legislative Council recently that there were 87,228 forest fire incidents in the state between 2021 and March 2026. In 2023, there were 23,685 incidents and in 2024, the numbers came down to 11,163.

RK Somashekar, former head, Department of Environmental Science, Bengaluru University, says that 99 per cent of forest fires in Karnataka are man-made. "There is no such thing as a natural fire," he says. In 2008, he conducted a study on forest fires in Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary (now Bhadra Tiger Reserve). Somashekar found that villagers were setting alight dry, dead bamboo in Muthodi range, in Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. The height of the bamboo enhances the vertical spread of fire, resulting in a crown or canopy fire, the study pointed out. Somashekar says fire risk areas are dominated by moist deciduous and dry deciduous bamboo. More than 35 per cent of slopes near settlements and less than 100 metres from roads fall under high degree of fire risk, while moist, dry deciduous and bamboo within 1,000 metres of settlements, 100 to 200 metres from roads, and 5 to 10 per cent of slopes are at medium risk of fire; those falling 200 to 300 metres away from roads, and 1,000 to 2,000 metres from settlements fall under low risk of fire.

"Agriculture and plantations 2,000 to 3,000 metres away from settlements, 300 to 400 metres away from roads do not face any fire risk at all. This is because these properties are managed by farmers themselves," says Somashekar.

Who lights the fires?

The state has 38,284km of forest area -- 5 per cent of the total forest area of the country, which includes tiger reserves such as Bandipur, Nagarahole, Bhadra, Kudremukh, Kali and BRT Tiger Reserve, and several wildlife sanctuaries. However, the protected areas prone to forest fires are Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, BRT Tiger Reserve and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, which are mostly scrub, dry deciduous and moist deciduous patches harbouring crucial Schedule 1 animals like tiger, elephant, leopard, dhol and herbivores like Indian gaur, chital, sambar, mount jack and other animals. "Most of these forests have very rich flora and fauna. There have been selective fires in these forests. Villagers in the fringes and poachers and small-time smugglers who decamp with poached materials and timber are the culprits," says Somashekar. He suggests intense awareness campaigns and the need for working with locals by providing them a good living and taking them into confidence to prevent forest fires. "The forest department should rope in Doordarshan, All India Radio and other media to educate people about the impact of forest fires and announce rewards to locals to inform about miscreants who set fire to the forest. The department should mark fire-prone areas and have an integrated forest fire prevention network using the latest tools to detect fires, and also have a rapid response team," says Somashekar.

Kumar Pushkar, Principal Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, says every year the department begins fire prevention exercises from the first week of December. "Wildlife areas are prone to fire accidents and we put in maximum effort to prevent fires. We start marking fire lines (controlled burning). We recruit fire watchers to the Protected Areas. We have identified sensitive areas and the staff is deputed to vantage positions so the entire forest is visible. In case of fire, they alert the ground staff who get into action," he says. Pushkar says the Fire and Emergency department has been giving frequent training to forest staff and watchers.

Soil factor

According to a study published in the International Journal of Research in Agronomy, 'Studies on Impact of Forest Fire on Physical and Chemical Properties of Soil Under Different Vegetation Types in Uttara Kannada district', dry deciduous forest patches -- most of the forests of Bandipur, Nagarahole, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary -- are prone to fire accidents, followed by moist deciduous forests and tropical semi-evergreen forests. The study by researchers Raji J Mohan, Forestry College, Sirsi; UAS Dharwad, and Gopal V Dasar, Professor Soil Science, Forestry College, Sirsi, and others aimed at finding impact on soil in select dry deciduous forests, and moist deciduous forests of Dandeli and Banavasi found there was severe loss of soil nutrients in the dry deciduous area.

95% of forest fires in Karnataka are man-made

Survey of India reports show that 45% of forest fires are repeat incidents

Forest dept annually recruits 30 fire watchers for each range across the state

Bandipur, Nagarhole and BRT Tiger Reserves most vulnerable to fire accidents

Bandipur has 13 ranges -- Bandipur, Kundakere, Gopalaswamy Betta, Madduru, Omkara, Hediyala, Moliyuru, Ainuriu Marigudi, N - Begur, Gundre, Nuggu and Gundlupet

Nagarahole has seven ranges -- Antharasanthe, Metikuppe, DB Kuppe, Veeranahosahalli, Nagarahole, Hunsur and Kallalla

BRT has six ranges -- Yalanduru, Kollegal, Biluru, Punjanuru, K-Gudi and Chamarajanagara

Experts say fire incidents lead to migration of herbivores and might result in man-animal conflict, both directly & indirectly

Forest Fire Alerts reported through satellite (2021 -2026)

YEAR	INSIDE FOREST AREA	500M AROUND FOREST AREA	TOTAL
2021	8,321	3,843	12,164
2022	7,794	4,058	11,852
2023	18,801	4,884	23,685
2024	7,942	3,221	11,163
2025	12,627	5,567	18,194
2026*	6,987	3,183	10,170

(With inputs from BK Lakshmikantha from Mysuru)

* Till March 3

Forest dept should rope in Doordarshan, AIR and other media to educate people about impact of forest fires and announce rewards to locals to inform about miscreants who set fire — RK Somashekar, former head, Department of Environmental Science, Bengaluru University

Brave men in the line of fire

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @ Karwar

THE traditional method of dousing fires has affected forest staff and taken a toll on them. In February 2017, 28-year-old forest guard Murigeppa Tammagol died while fighting a forest fire in Kalkere range of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. According to the postmortem report, he died due to asphyxiation and severe burns as he was caught in thick smog while dousing the flames. He was a deputy range forest officer at Moleyur range in Bandipur.

A range forest officer and a few others were also injured in this incident. Six years later, on February 18, 2023, another forest guard, Sunderesh, died of burns at Kadumane in Sakleshpur, and other staff members were injured. These incidents indicate that the forest department needs to use state-of-the-art facilities and adopt more care and caution while extinguishing fires.

"Fighting fire in the dry deciduous tracks of the Western Ghats is challenging. With a rise in global average temperatures, it is more difficult to put off fires in burning lantana and other invasive species. Forest staff should be more vigilant to prevent blazes, and protection measures in the pre-fire season are key. Old fire lines, which are covered with invasive species and forest growth, must be maintained. Sometimes, it may require cutting down grown trees. But when a fire becomes uncontrollable, helicopter services should be made available for pouring water from the top," said BK Singh, retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

"We appoint fire watchers to douse fires. The traditional method of extinguish a fire is beating it with bushes and gunny bags. We have now provided them with blowers. They are effective in stopping the spread of flames," said Kumar Pushkar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden.

He said the staff is trained in how to be alert in case of extreme fire and smoke. "They are told to cover themselves with soaked clothes. They are provided water to keep themselves hydrated. There are chances of people collapsing in case of a big fire and smoke," he said. "We also provide water sprinklers and other equipment which help tame the fire immediately," he said.

But with the fire incidents continuing, locals blame the authorities for diverting staff to civil works than marking fire lines and clearing vegetation.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR OF FOREST FIRES IS KEY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

RK Somashekar, former head, Department of Environmental Science, Bengaluru University, is advocating the extensive use of remote sensing satellite images for addressing the issue of forest fires. He says satellite remote sensing provides practical means of monitoring and acquiring information about spatial distribution of fore scars and fore activity. "Understanding the behaviour of forest fires, factors that contribute to making an environment fire-prone, and factors that influence fire behaviour are essential for forest fire risk zone mapping," he says. GIS and IRS provide necessary tools to map hazardous fire incidents.

In a scientific paper, 'Application of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System in Mapping Forest Fire Risk Zone at Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary' authored by him and another researcher, SV Sowmya, he says images were converted into android data and superimposed on maps to draw the fore maps.

"There was a field visit to confirm the accuracy. We tried this in Bhadra and Bandipur and confirmed the accuracy of the images. The area of the fire, date, time and extent of damage caused can be analysed. We did this in 2010, when we used to get images of 36x36 metre pixels. Now technology has changed drastically. We get data from IRS and other data, where we get a resolution up to 1x1 m pixels," he says. The forest department should have an integrated forest fire prevention network where an expert should work on extracting remote sensing data and channelize it to places across the state, mapping places vulnerable to forest fire.

"This should be a constant process, not working just for three months of fire season. Data should have details of the previous image, fire time reports and post-fire incident to assess the damage," he said. Khandre said the department, with support from Karnataka State Remote Sensing Application Centre, will monitor fire alerts.

Priyank, Shobha trade barbs over three-language policy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

RULING Congress and Opposition BJP leaders in Karnataka continued their war of words over the three-language policy for school students, with both sides trading sharp criticism over its implementation and intent.

While RDPR and IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge questioned BJP leaders on the benefits of implementing Hindi and the three-language policy, Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje said that Congress leaders in Karnataka are creating unnecessary confusion.

Speaking to reporters, Priyank questioned BJP leaders to explain advantages of Hindi language or three language policy, instead of criticising for the sake of it. He said said the state is open to discussion if raised constructively. Accusing BJP leaders of trying to "stay in the good books" of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Priyank said that Kannada, one of the oldest classical languages, must be preserved and promoted. He also flagged disparity in Central funding, claiming Sanskrit receives significant support while Kannada gets little. "How many speak Sanskrit in Karnataka? Does PM Narendra Modi or Amit Shah speak Sanskrit? The funding for Sanskrit by Centre is to please RSS leaders and in Karnataka, BJP leaders are trying to woo Shah and therefore they are supporting Hindi language. Shah is interested in making Hindi as national language," he said.

Highlighting linguistic diversity, Priyank also said regional languages like Tulu deserve official recognition and stressed the need to prioritise protection of local language and culture. He questioned whether MPs from Karnataka have adequately raised such issues in Parliament.

Hitting back, Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje said learning multiple languages is not imposition, asserting that students benefit from knowing more languages. Shobha said she herself faced criticism for speaking Hindi in Parliament but stressed that Kannadigas value their language while also embracing others.

Accusing the State Government of creating confusion, she said the issue was raised during exams, causing stress among students. She criticised the government as "irresponsible" and alleged that it was insensitive to students' mental pressure.

Sri Siddalinga Swamiji of Siddaganga Mutt addresses the media in Tumakuru on Sunday | EXPRESS

President Murmu to attend 119th birth anniversary celebrations of Shivakumara Swamiji in Tumakuru

TUMAKURU: President Droupadi Murmu will visit Siddaganga Mutt in Tumakuru at 11 am on April 1 to take part in the 'Guruvandana' programme marking the 119th birth anniversary of Dr Sri Shivakumara Swamiji. She will be the second Indian President to visit the mutt. Former President Pratibha Patil took part in the 102 birthday celebrations of the Swamiji in 2009. "We are all very proud that she hails from a poor tribal community. This is a matter of pride for our Tumakuru as we are all waiting for her arrival," head of the Mutt Sri Siddalinga Swamiji told reporters on Sunday. Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Suttur seer Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Swamiji, Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and V Somanna, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara, Industries Minister MB Patil and Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar will take part in the event. In the wake of the SSLC examinations, the Mutt has decided not to go with the usual, day-long elaborate cultural events, except for a veena recitation by Jyothi Chetan and team from Bengaluru and 'vachana gayana' by Shyla Siddaramappa's troupe of 119 singers. **ENS**

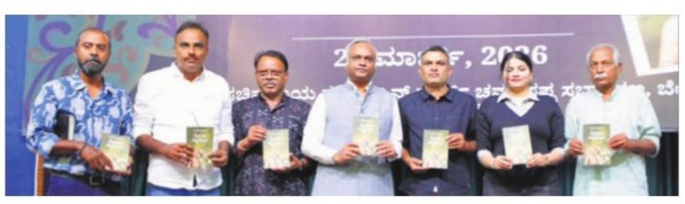
Priyank vows to support 100 history writers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"The relics that were found and continued to surface from Bengal to Gujarat and Kashmir to Sri Lanka have been establishing the history of Ashoka the Great. Who hid that history? The genuine history was written in Pali and Prakrit not Sanskrit," Priyank Kharge said.

Priyank said he has launched a project to nurture around 100 history writers from the new generation. "Tipu Sultan fought against the British, but the RSS did not even raise its voice against them. Twisting history as per one's wishes has become a fashion. This is no longer a hobby, but a business worth thousands of crores of rupees," he said, alleging that the Sangh Parivar, RSS and BJP are producing propaganda films to help their designs.

"Those who graduated from WhatsApp university are making films. Gujarat Files, Kashmir Files, Kerala Story, Chava and many other flicks have hit the screens. If common people watch these films and they make hundreds of crores, there is no problem. But, if a a history teacher says Dhurandar opened her eyes, it is really worrying. One teacher influences a hundred children, and those hundred can influence many more, and this could spoil the health of society," he commented.



Minister Priyank Kharge releases the book 'Karavaliya Charitreyalli Hyder Ali Mattu Tipu Sultan' authored by journalist Naveen Surinje in Bengaluru on Sunday

A TGSRTC electric bus caught fire at the Warangal-II depot in Hanamkonda, Telangana allegedly due to a short circuit while charging. No casualties were reported although the bus was partially damaged. The blaze was brought under control after nearly two hours

DMK PROMISES ₹8K TO HOMEMAKERS

CM Health Insurance Scheme to be expanded to ₹10L; Stalin expresses confidence he will win 200+ seats

PRABHAKAR TAMILARASU
@Chennai

DAYS after the AIADMK promised refrigerators to voters if it comes to power in the upcoming Assembly polls, the ruling DMK on Sunday upped the ante in its manifesto by assuring the implementation of an 'illatharasi scheme' under which women heads of families not in the income tax bracket will receive a coupon worth ₹8,000 to purchase or replace household appliances.

"Women heads of the family can select household essentials like washing machine, TV, grinder, fridge, mixer, microwave oven, induction stove etc. of their choice either to purchase or exchange at their nearby stores," Chief Minister and party president MK Stalin said, unveiling the poll promises. Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi, who led the manifesto committee, said the decision to offer a coupon was taken to give a choice to the women.

Speaking to reporters, the CM said his government had implemented several schemes which were not part of the DMK's election manifesto in 2021. "The DMK manifesto has been called a hero. This time, the manifesto is also the hero-

TN CM MK Stalin with party leader Kanimozhi Karunanidhi at the release of the party's manifesto in Chennai | PTI

ine and is entering the election as a superstar," Stalin, who is confident of winning over 200 seats out of 234 in the April 23 election said.

Stalin said the monthly financial aid for women under the Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai scheme would be raised from ₹1,000 to ₹2,000. The old age pension scheme would be increased from ₹1,200 to ₹2,000 and financial assistance for persons with disabilities would be increased to ₹2,500. The popular Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme, currently implemented for students up to Class 5, will be extended to Class 8, he added. He assured the annual salary limit for enrolment in the CM's Medical insurance Scheme would be raised to ₹5 lakh per annum while coverage under the scheme would be raised to ₹10 lakh.

Vijayan dismisses CPI(M)-SDPI deal allegation, vows to fight communalism

Malappuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the CPI(M) has consistently maintained an uncompromising stand against communalism, while accusing the UDF of attempting to mislead the public for political gains. He was responding to reporters' queries on UDF's allegation that the CPI(M) has entered into an understanding with the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) in several constituencies. He also asked the media to go and talk to the SDPI leaders to know about their political stand. "The CPI(M) and the Left Front have always upheld a uncompromising stance against communal forces. There are minority and majority communalism in the country, and we have been adopting a strong stand against both," he said.

Vijay to contest from two constituencies

PRABHAKAR TAMILARASU
@Chennai

ANNOUNCING his party's candidates for 2026 Assembly elections, actor-turned-politician and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam declared that he will make his electoral debut from two constituencies — Perambur in Chennai and Tiruchy East.

Among the candidates fielded in the state's 234 constituencies are TVK general secretary N Anand from T Nagar, treasurer P Venkataraman from Mylapore, and campaign management general secretary Aadhav Arjuna from Villivakkam. Deputy general secretaries CTR Nirmal Kumar and Raj Mohan have been fielded from Thirupparankundram and Egmore, respectively.

Former AIADMK leader KA Sengottaiyan, who recently joined TVK, will contest from

TVK chief Vijay with party candidates, in Chennai, on Sunday | PTI

his stronghold of Gobichettipalayam, while former IRS officer and party propaganda secretary KG Arunraj has been nominated from Tiruchengode.

Reiterating that the fight is between the ruling DMK and TVK, Vijay said, "This election is between the people's alliance led by TVK and the Stalin alliance."

Taking a swipe at the ruling front, he said parties that once formed the People Welfare Alliance (Makkal Nala Kootani in 2016) eventually aligned with the DMK. "It is an alliance stitched together like broken glass pieces stuck together," he remarked. TVK announces financial assistance for unemployed graduates

Vijay said that unemployed graduates and diploma holders (aged above 29 years) would be given a monthly financial assistance of ₹4,000 and ₹2,000, respectively, if TVK forms the government. Promising stringent measures to curb drug abuse through community-based policing and anti-narcotic drug clubs in schools and colleges, Vijay announced that free education loans up to ₹20 lakh would be given for students from Class 12 up to PhD.

LPG allocation to K'taka raised to 68%; priority supply begins

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Food and Civil Supplies Minister KH Muniyappa said that the Union Government has increased the LPG allocation to the state to 68%, and they are supplying 29,463 commercial cylinders under "priority-based regulated distribution" from Sunday.

"With this increase in allocation, hotels and restaurants would receive 17,500 cylinders daily. The allocation to hotels is now up, and 60% of their regular demand is fulfilled with the increased allocation," he said. The minister called upon people to use LPG judiciously, and use an electric stove and firewood wherever possible till situation improves.

Addressing the media in Bengaluru on Sunday with an update on the status of the commercial cylinder supply, Muniyappa said, "Commercial cylinders are distributed on a priority basis. Of the 29,463 cylinders available daily as per the increased quota, 4,200 are supplied to educational institutions and hostels, 1,200 to airports, railway stations and bus stands and 6,000 cylinders are supplied to seed processing industries, agriculture and allied sectors and 563 cylinders are given on request."

He said there is no shortage of auto LPG and the State Government is closely monitoring the supply. "Auto LPG is readily available at 72 auto LPG dispensing stations across Karnataka, including 31 stations in Bengaluru. The oil marketing companies (OMCs) are supplying auto LPG at Rs. 77.74 per litre," he said. During the last week, public sector OMCs dispensed an average of 64.9 tonnes of auto LPG per day, compared to 57.6 tonnes per day prior to the conflict, indicating an increase in supply, he added. The minister said 27 FIRs and 1,169 cases have been booked for illegal storage of cylinders. A total of 1,603 domestic and commercial cylinders have been confiscated, Muniyappa said.

He said instructions have been given to police stations to keep a tight vigil on the sale of cylinders in the black market. He also warned LPG distributors who are overcharging that their licenses would be cancelled and legal action taken.

SACRED SUNDAY

Christians hold palm crosses to mark Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of Lent, at St Andrew's Church on Cubbon Road in Bengaluru | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Bill to curb hate speech tabled in T'gana Assembly

HYDERABAD: In a move to curb hate speech and hate crimes in Telangana, the government tabled a Bill in the Legislative Assembly prescribing a jail term up to 10 years and fine of ₹1,00,000. Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu, on behalf of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, introduced "The Telangana Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2026" in the Assembly on Sunday. The Bill defines prejudicial interest to include bias on the grounds of religion, race, caste or community, sex, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, residence, language, disability and tribe.

El Niño conditions to cause rain shortage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

C GOVINDARAJU, professor at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), told TNIE that the emerging El Niño conditions could translate into rainfall shortfalls for the state. "High temperatures will adversely affect agricultural operations. Water scarcity may also force wild animals to venture into human settlements in search of food and water, and there could be a rise in the incidence of disease among people," he said.

Loss of property till March 23

Human loss due to lighting : 5 (one each in Bidar, Gadag, Koppal, Raichur and Vijayanagar districts)
Human loss due to house/wall collapse: 1 (Belagavi district)

Animal and crop loss from March 15 to 23
Big animal loss : 16 -- Dharwad (6), Hassan (1), Koppal (1), Kalaburagi (2), Mysuru (2), Raichur (3), Vijayapura (1)

Small animal loss : 116 -- Bagalkot (41), Belagavi (39), Dharwad (32), Gadag (4)
Agriculture crop loss: 1,700.33 hectares -- Bagalkot (743 ha) maize, wheat, sugarcane, Ballari (602 ha) paddy, Belagavi (106 ha) maize and wheat, Chamarajanagar (27 ha) sugarcane, Chitradurga (4.05 ha) maize

SCIENTIFIC FRATERNITY FRUSTRATED WITH K'TAKA GOVT IGNORING THEM

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

SCIENTISTS and researchers from various reputed scientific institutions are frustrated and disappointed over the state government ignoring their recommendations and observations on projects despite them being based on scientific research and dealing with future safety, sustainability and cost minimization.

Some projects wherein recommendations from scientific establishments have been ignored are: Recommendations on the ecologically fragile Western Ghats protection by Prof TV Ramachandra, a world-renowned expert on energy, wetlands, soil and water Pollution, geographical information system and remote sensing from the Centre of Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), regarding ecological fragility of the Western Ghats; IISc's warnings about impending environmental disasters at Bellandur Lake, while providing actionable, economical solutions that were ignored; the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) providing recommendations to curb pollution in the Vrishabhavathi river, but a comprehensive implementation plan not been undertaken by the state; and several recommendations from Bengaluru-based scientific institutions in urban planning ignored by civic agencies about roads, transport, water, air, transport and city planning, which have ended in haphazard development of Bengaluru.

The projects carried out by ignoring scientific recommendations in-

clude concrete box storm water drains, reduction of buffer zones along water bodies, cup-and-saucer and soup-bowl-type of lake rejuvenation models, sending untreated water downstream to other districts, allowing inflow of sewage into lakes to keep them perennial, construction of high rises along narrow roads, white-topped roads, tunnel roads, double-decker flyovers, glass buildings and clearance to civil projects in forest patches and near famous waterfalls, and underpasses and overpasses for wild animals.

Experts said there are globally recognised science institutions in Bengaluru ready to help the state government. "We are approached only when courts order. And yet the inputs remain only on paper or for namesake," said an expert from NIAS. "Doing research, conducting pilot studies and submitting reports to the government free of cost is not part of our job profile. But we do it as we want to contribute to society. But it is ignored. It is frustrating. Government spends not less than Rs 4-5crore on private consultants, who give reports that suit their requirement and not what the City or state actually needs," said Prof Ashish Verma, mobility expert from IISc. "In fact, other state governments and the ministries are approaching us for inputs."

Prof Ramachandra, said, "We have met and submitted reports to bureaucrats, whenever required. But they are not implemented. Instead of using the existing system, they approach consultants. There is a nexus between bureaucrats and consultants. There should be a norm in the country that relatives of politicians and bureaucrats should not participate in tendering processes."

A Gandhi Krishi Vignana Kendra (GKVK) professor, who requested anonymity, said, "We are made members of technical advisory committees to give inputs on lakes, biodiversity and environment. We are expected to approve whatever civil engineers say. If we oppose, we are sidelined. How wise is it to convert existing forest patches into tree parks with pergolas, walking and jogging tracks and gyms? Instead of planting flowering and nectaring plants, engineers create structures for butterflies spending crores of rupees. It is best to just do research and prepare reports."

Another researcher from Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) said, "I am envious of my colleagues in other countries. They excel in their research fields and their contributions and recommendations are taken by the governments, while we are stuck here trying to correct what is wrong rather than contributing to what is right and required for future generations. Isn't that the primary role of research institutions?"

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW APPELLATE, AT CHENNAI (APPELLATE JURISDICTION)
TA/(AT) No. 267/2021
Company Appeal (AT) No.41/2020
In the matter of
Shri M. Gopal ...Appellant
V
Sri Ganga Reddy & 2 Ors. ...Respondents
With
Company Appeal (AT) (CH) No. 136/2025 (IA Nos.1480 & 1481/2025)
Memo of Parties:
Sri Gopal Muniyappa, S/o Muniyappa Thimappa, Bevahalli, Padmaghatta, Kasabahobli, Mulbagalu Taluk, Kolar District - 564132. ...Appellants
Versus
1. Sri Ganga Reddy S/o Anjappa Reddy, R/at No.18, 5th Cross, Sir M.V. Nagar II Block, Ramamurthynagara, Bengaluru - 560016.
2. MG-6 Wholesale Market India Pvt Ltd, Regd. Off : Kappalamadgu, (Panchayath and Post), Mulbagalu Taluk, Kolar District - 563131
3. Sri. Ramachandra Gowda, #03, Chandru Nivas - 3rd Floor, 13th Main, RMV Extension, Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru - 560080. ...Respondents
Dear Sir,
Sub:- Notice in TA/(AT) No.267/2021 – Company Appeal (AT) No.41/2020 with Company Appeal (AT) (CH) No. 136/2025 (IA Nos. 1480 & 1481/2025) on the file of Before the Hon'ble National Company Law Appellate, at Chennai.
According to the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal Order dated February 13.02.2024, notices have been issued to Respondent Nos. 1-3. A report filed with the registry on 11.03.2024, states that the notice for Respondent Nos. 1-3 was returned because the door was found locked.
As no representative appeared on behalf of the appellant, the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal has directed the appellant to serve the respondents through substitute service by publishing the notice in two widely circulated newspapers.
On 12.03.2026, since no representative was present for the appellant, the Registry was instructed to inform the appellant's counsel about the order for necessary compliance. The case will be called again on 12.03.2026.
This matter is scheduled to be listed on 24.04.2026, under the caption "For Orders."
Please ensure to appear before the Hon'ble NCLAT, Chennai Bench, on 24.04.2026, either in person or through your counsel. If you fail to appear, the matter will be decided in your absence without any further notice.
Mr. M V V Ramana
Counsel for the Appellant
505 & 506, 5th Floor, Brigade Towers, 135, Brigade Road, Bangalore - 560025.
Date : 30th March, 2026

Form No. URC-2
Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI
[Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]
1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar at Bangalore that White Tusker LLP AAZ-4703, a business entity may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.
2.The principal objects of the company are follows :
To carry on the business of interior designers, decorators and consultants, and to provide services in the field of interior designing, space planning, aesthetic enhancement and layout design for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional premises, including preparation of designs, drawings, plans, specifications, estimates and project reports and other ancillary business.
3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at No.1331,13th Cross, Indiranagar Bangalore-560038.
4.Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at No.1331, 13th Cross, Indiranagar, Bangalore -560038, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.
Dated this 29th day of March 2026.
For White Tusker LLP
Name(s) of Applicant
Sd/-1. Varun Yogendra Parikh
Sd/-2. Naveen Dambekodi Chandrashekar
Sd/- 3. Attavar Smriti

IN THE COURT OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore-560 001
O.A. No. 2109/2024
Between: HDFC Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
:AND:
SRI. DEVANANDA C S ...Defendants
To,
1. Sri. Devananda C S,
Aged about 37 years, S/o Sri. Siddappa, No. 17, Hosapalya, 4th Block, Ground Floor, Bengaluru - 560068
Also at: Sri. Devananda C S,
Aged about 37 years, S/o Sri. Siddappa, Accenture Solutions Private Ltd, Bellandur, Bangalore 560103
And also at: Sri. Devananda C S,
Aged about 37 years, S/o Sri. Siddappa, Pragathi Amber Flat-A-803, Floor - Eighth, Sy. Nos. 13/1,13/3, 13/12,13/5,14/1, Kammasandra Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Electronic City, Bengaluru - 560100
2. Smt. Nirmala, Aged about 31 years, W/o Sri. Devananda C S, No.17, Hosapalya, 4th Block, Ground Floor, Bengaluru - 560068
3. M/s SLV Concretes,
Having its registered office at: No.183/2, Singahena Agrahara Village, Fruit Market Road, Sarjapur Hobli, Near Gold Coin Club, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru - 560100
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT UNDER RULE 23 (Viii) OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION
WHEREAS the applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions, Act, 1993, against the above defendants for the recovery of sum of Rs. 42,07,837/- (Rupees Forty Two Lakhs Seven Thousand Eight Hundred And Thirty Seven Only) amount together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.
The above defendant is therefore, hereby directed to before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or through authorized agents in support of their defence to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **20-05-2026 at 10:30 a.m.** as why the relief's prayed for should not be granted.
Take notice that in case default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this day of 27-2-2026.
BY THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
Sd/- REGISTRAR-2
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BANGALORE

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II AT BANGALORE
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House , Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore -560 001
O.A. No.45/2022
BETWEEN : BANK OF INDIA, J. C. Road Branch,No. 4/2, OTC Road, Off J. C. Road, Behind LIC Building, Near Sharada Talkies, Bangalore - 560 002. ...Applicant
Versus
Smt. Gayathri Shankar & Others ....Defendants
SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION
To, Defendant:
1. Smt. Gayathri Shankar, Aged about 49 years, W/o. Sri Shankar Ganesh, Residing at : 1039, 5th A Main Road, 3rd Cross, West of Chord Road, Basaveshwara nagar, Bangalore - 560 079.
Under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against the defendants for recovery of a sum of **Rs.21,34,285.41ps** (Rupees Twenty One Lakhs Thirty Four Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Five and Paise Forty One Only) together with current and future interest and other reliefs.
The above mentioned defendants are required to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an advocate n support of their defense to show cause within 30 days or on **15.06.2026 at 10.30 a.m.** as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.
Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal, on this the **03.02.2026**
By Order of the Tribunal
Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal -II.

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
Kuluvanahalli Branch , Mob: 91 99998666,
Email: cb1919@canarabank.com
Possession Notice
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Canara Bank under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated **09.01.2026** upon the borrower **Smt. Kenchamma (Borrower & Mortgagor)** and **Sri Eranna C (Co Borrower)** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, being **Rs.4,81,904.29** (Rupees Four lakhs Eighty One Thousand Nine Hundred Four and Twenty Nine Paise Only) within 60 days from the date of the said notice.
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of power coferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rule on this **24th of March, 2026.**
The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Canara Bank, Kuluvanahalli Branch for an amount of **Rs. 4,41,400.89** (Rupees Four lakhs Forty One Thousand Four Hundred and Paise Eighty Nine Only) as on 07.03.2026 plus interest and other expenses thereon.
Description of the immovable Property

Sl No	Description of the Immovable assets	Name of Title Holder
1.	**Schedule A :** All the piece and parcel of immovable property bearing Kaheshumari khata No. 19/28/3, PID No. 150300701800620032 sitituated at Lakkasandra Village, Aerobommanahalli Village Panchayat , Thyamagondlu Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District, east to West 30 ft, North to south 40 ft Total measuring 1200 sq. ft. Boundaries: North : Road, South : Property of Meli Gangaiah, East : Property of Honnegowda, West : Property of Krishnappa.	**Smt. Kenchamma**

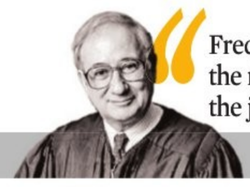
Date:24.03.2026
Place: Kuluvanahalli
Sd/-
Authorised Officer

IN THE COURT OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore-560 001
O.A. No. 666/2025
Between: HDFC Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
:AND:
SRI. SINHA SAHADEV ...Defendants
To,
2. M/s Suvastu Projects Pvt. Ltd.,
A Company incorporated under the Companies Act, Represented by its Managing Director and Authorized Signatory Mr. Manoj Kumar,
Having its office at: No. 49, AMR Plaza, 18th Main, 3rd Sector, HSR Layout, Bangalore - 560 102.
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT UNDER RULE 23 (Viii) OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION
WHEREAS the applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions, Act, 1993, against the above defendants for the recovery of sum of Rs. 29,02,180/- (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakhs Two Thousand One Hundred And Eighty Only) amount together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.
The above mentioned defendants are required to appear therefore hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly instructed in support of their defence to show cause on **16-06-2026 at 10:30 a.m.** as why the relief's prayed for should not be granted.
Take notice that in case default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this day of 27-2-2026.
BY THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
Sd/- REGISTRAR-2
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BANGALORE

DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II AT BANGALORE
4th Floor, BSNL Building, Rajbhavan Road, Bengaluru- 560 001
O.A. No.347/2024
Between : **STATE BANK OF INDIA,** Represented by its Chief Manager, Stressed Asset Recovery Branch, (SARB), Mr. Krishna Kant Rastogi, J. C. Road, Bangalore - 560 002 , Email ID : sbi.05173@ sbi.co.in, PAN No.AAACS8577K, IFSC Code : SBIN0005173, Mobile No. 9480841423
...Applicant
AND
Mr. Umakant Singh and Another
....Defendants
SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES 1993 TO THE DEFENDANT No.2 THROUGH PAPER PUBLICATION
To : Mrs Ramita Singh W/o. Umakant Singh, Aged about 39 years, Residing at H. No. 74, Ground Floor, RMV 2nd Stage, 3rd Block, 2nd Phase, MSR Nagar, Mathikere,Opp Mega Mart Road, Bangalore - 560 054.
...Defendant No. 2
1. WHEREAS, the Applicant has instituted an Application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against Defendant for Recovery sum of **Rs.29,52,574/-** (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakhs Fifty Two Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy Four Only)
2. The above mentioned Defendant are directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an advocate or duly authorised agent in support of your defence to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **04.05.2026 at 11.00 a.m.** as to why reliefs prayed should not be granted.
3.Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal, on this the **29.12.2025** at Bangalore.
By order of the Tribunal
Sd/-Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-2,
Bengaluru

QuoteExpress **WITHOUT HARD WORK, NOTHING GROWS BUT WEEDS**
❯ GORDON B HINCKLEY

EDITORIAL



"Frequently you have a clash between the more sterile letter of the law and the justice that underlies it... Harold H Greene

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

MEDIATION SIGNALS RISE, TABLES CLAIMED, NOT LAID, WAR FRONT SETS THE PACE

DIPLOMATIC signalling is intensifying across West Asia, but the gap between such overtures and reality is widening. Mediation is being offered, channels are opening and multiple actors are rushing to claim space at the negotiating table, each hinting at de-escalation. But these signals are out of sync with recent events. The conflict is not pausing for diplomacy; it is expanding on its own terms, faster and wider, and increasingly seems beyond the reach of those trying to contain it.

The arrival of USS Tripoli, carrying some 3,500 sailors and marines, shows the hard edge behind the messaging. The Americans have confirmed its deployment as Washington weighs its next move. Earlier reports point to a Marine Expeditionary Unit, designed for rapid, high-intensity operations from evacuations under fire to amphibious assaults, joining the war fray. This isn't posturing. It's preparation.

Efforts to contain escalation are becoming increasingly precarious, with no clear diplomatic track on offer. Countries such as Egypt, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are positioning themselves to open channels, but their roles remain largely facilitative conduits. The larger challenge is preventing an already expanding conflict from widening further, especially around critical chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz, where disruption would carry even more far-reaching global economic and security consequences.

Managing rivalries, securing energy flows and stabilising a fragile region ultimately depends on more powerful stakeholders already party to the conflict and their willingness to opt for the path of diplomacy. As it is, the conflict itself is evolving. The Houthis' entry marks a clear structural shift. Their missile launches toward Israel open another front and deepen the risk to global shipping. The Houthis have already shown they can disrupt Red Sea trade routes; their direct involvement raises the prospect of sustained pressure on maritime flows, energy supplies and insurance costs.

This is the key change. The war is no longer confined or linear. It is becoming multi-fronted, with the possibility that non-state actors can shape escalation as much as states. That makes it harder to predict, harder to contain and less responsive to diplomatic pacing. Even limited openings, such as Iran allowing some ships to transit the Strait of Hormuz, do little to alter the trajectory. The prospect of mediation signals might be rising. But for now, the battlefield is moving faster than the talks, setting the pace.

NOT IDEAL, BUT NECESSARY: T'GANA'S ELDER CARE LAW

THE Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill, 2026 has been passed by the Telangana government, broadly in line with the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. The key difference is that the new Bill expands the scope of the law to include private employees, in addition to government staff and elected representatives. While provisions such as a salary deduction of 15 percent or ₹10,000, whichever is lower, remain unchanged, Telangana has gone a step further by proposing an institutional mechanism to ensure effective enforcement.

The move reflects a pressing need, especially in a country that often invokes the ideal of *matrudevo bhava*, *pitrudevo bhava*, yet increasingly falls short in practice. According to the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India 2021, 5.2 percent of India's elderly experienced abuse in 2020, with verbal abuse being the most common. In Telangana, the figure stands at 2.1 percent. Disturbingly, over half of the affected seniors reported neglect—rising to about 68 percent in Telangana.

These figures, however, represent only reported cases. In reality, many more incidents go unreported due to family pressures and social stigma. As Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy observed, it is unfortunate that legislation must intervene in what should be a natural bond between parents and children. While his remarks may appear strong, his assertion that those who abuse or abandon their parents should face social disapproval underscores the gravity of the issue. India's civilisational ethos has long placed parents and elders on a pedestal, equating them with the divine. Yet, in stark contrast, many elderly individuals today face emotional abuse, neglect and even dispossession of their own property by the very children they raised.

This raises a difficult question: can legislation alone address what is essentially a moral crisis? Existing laws, including the central Act and similar measures in states such as Assam, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh, have not fully alleviated the problem. Even so, given the scale of the issue, enforcement remains necessary. At the same time, legal measures must be complemented by greater awareness—both of the law and values it seeks to uphold. In an era increasingly defined by nuclear families, and perhaps moving toward greater individualism, what is needed is not just regulation, but a broader cultural renewal.

QUICK TAKE

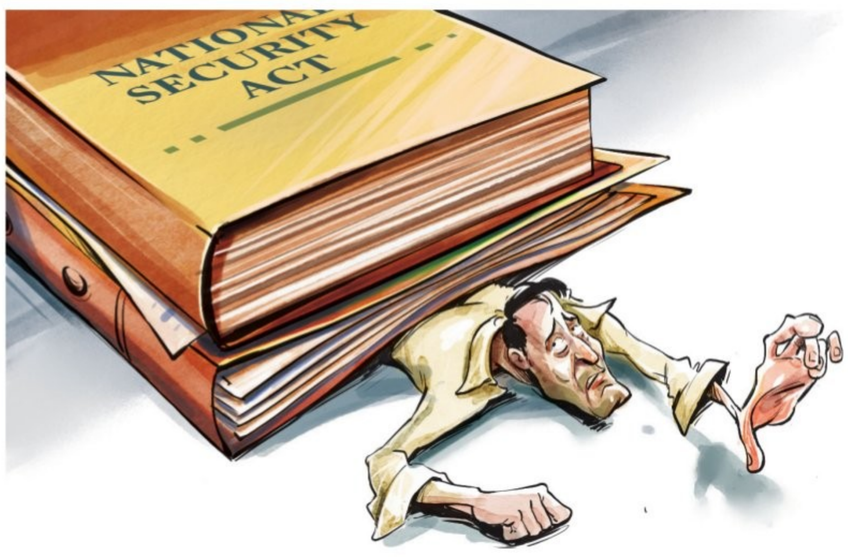
PUFF NESTS

ACROSS Ecuador, Poland, Mexico and New Zealand, birds such as Darwin's finches, blue tits, house finches and song thrushes have been found collecting cigarette butts and placing them in their nests. Some birds even nest in open ashtrays. Researchers have found that these birds use chemical residues in the filters to keep parasites away from their young. Yet the same substances also affect developing chicks at the cellular level. What seems an odd urban quirk shows how deeply human pollution has penetrated into natural ecosystems. Ironically, the butts kill pests but also imperil the hatchlings. This dilemma is an indictment of human negligence. The story is less about smart birds and more about us.

The case shows how delayed court action and repeated adjournments can undermine justice, leaving important questions about liberty unanswered when detention orders are revoked before final judgement

LOOKING BACK AT JUSTICE IN SONAM WANGCHUK'S CASE

KAPIL SIBAL
Senior lawyer and member of Rajya Sabha



MANDAR PARDIKAR

SONAM Wangchuk's detention under the National Security Act (NSA) and the manner in which the Supreme Court dealt with the petition filed by his wife, Gitanjali Angmo, leave several unanswered questions.

The order of detention was passed on September 26, 2025, alleging that Wangchuk was indulging in activities prejudicial to the security of the State, maintenance of public order and services essential to the community.

While in normal circumstances, given the record of the court prior to 2014, the petition would have been dealt with forthwith, keeping aside all other matters, the manner in which the court dealt with this issue made me think that the cause of liberty is perhaps not as dear to the court as it should be. Such matters brook no delay and require immediate adjudication.

Upon detention, the detenu has certain procedural rights, entitling him to make representations to the state government and an advisory board. At the hearing before the advisory board, the detenu requested certain documents that had not been supplied to him within the statutory timeframe. He, thereafter, presented his case. The advisory board rendered its opinion on November 7, 2025 rejecting his petition for release, and the state government confirmed the order on November 11, 2025. All this happened while the detention was challenged in court.

The manner in which the proceedings were adjourned from time to time is evident from the fact that, after Wangchuk's detention, a petition for his release was filed on October 2, 2025 and notice was issued on October 6. The progress thereafter was abysmally slow: October and early November were largely taken up with adjournments, procedural directions and amendments to the petition. By late November, pleadings were still underway, with the State seeking time to respond.

The matter then saw little movement through December and early January due to repeated non-listing or paucity of time. Substantive hearings only commenced from January 8, 2026 and proceeded intermittently with further adjournments sought by the State. Even after extensive arguments from both sides through January and February, the State repeatedly sought additional time in late February and early March. Ultimately, before the court could render a decision, the detention was revoked on March 14, 2026 and the petition was disposed of on March 23 without adjudication.

Human freedoms are precious. They need to be protected through a court system that cherishes such freedoms. Surely, there is a sense of immediacy that must be reflected in the orders of the court, even when the matter is adjourned. Delay in adjudication in a petition challenging detention under the NSA is anathema to the cause of liberty.

This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has dealt with preventive detention in a somewhat casual manner. After the abrogation of Article 370, Omar Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were detained under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978, again on unjustified grounds of disturbing public order and security. Unfortunately, even then, the court did not display any urgency, but gave the government time to respond. The State claimed that the sensitive security situation did not warrant their immediate release. The court sought a status report from the government. Omar's detention continued for months without adjudication. Under the PSA, detention can be extended without trial for up to two years. Judicial scrutiny was deferred.

Article 21 is the heart and soul of the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. They cannot be casually dealt with, and legal challenges must be swiftly remedied either way. A cautious, deferential approach that prioritises the State's claims to security over concerns about liberty now appears to be part of our jurisprudence.

Similarly, Farooq Abdullah's petition challenging his detention under the PSA was filed on September 16, 2019. The first substantive hearing in the matter was held on September 30, 2019. Subsequent hearings took place in October and November. Over time, the matter became infructuous. Eventually, Farooq Abdullah was released on March 13, 2020, and Omar Abdullah, on March 24, 2020, both through revocation orders passed by the appropriate government.

Some other jurisdictions give such matters top priority by requiring a quick resolution. Within 24 to 48 hours, the detenu's presence is sought, and the matter is dealt with forthwith. Preventive detention is an assault on human freedoms and should not be dealt with in a manner that suggests that courts allow prolonged hearings delaying adjudication for months. Thereafter, withdrawal of the detention order renders such matters infructuous.

This is exactly what happened in the case of Sonam Wangchuk. The matter was fully argued. The detaining authority, represented by the law officers, opposed the challenge to the detention order with exceptional vehemence and filed a counter-affidavit in support of the detention. Despite the fact that arguments in rejoinder by counsel for the petitioner were over, yet another opportunity was sought by counsel of the detaining authority to clarify certain issues, a privilege granted, and unheard of in such matters. Eventually, before the clarification could be heard, the detention was revoked by an administrative order.

The further question that arises is whether, in such circumstances, the court should allow the matter to be rendered infructuous, especially when it has been fully argued. It is possible that the detaining authority's counsel, sensing that the detention order may well be quashed, decided not to embarrass the detaining authority and withdrew the detention order, rendering the proceedings infructuous.

It is a matter for the court, especially in circumstances where the matter has been fully heard, not to allow a detention order to be rendered infructuous and to decide it one way or the other. Such a procedure results in a precedent that allows the State the privilege of not inviting a judgement. The counsel for the petitioner sought yet another date for submissions to be made for adjudication. That was not to be.

It is time for the court to introspect. It is time for it to send a signal that the cause of liberty is as close to its heart as it is to those who framed the Constitution.

(Views are personal)
(Tweets @KapilSibal)

PALMS, PASSOVER, PROMISE

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

PALM Sunday was yesterday, Good Friday is on April 3 and Easter is on April 5 so happy Easter in advance, dear readers. I know that Christmas and Easter are the most important Christian festivals, but I also have a soft corner for Palm Sunday. It marks the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem to observe the Jewish festival of Passover, humbly riding on a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9-10, 'Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey'.

Jesus radiated the lustre of a chosen being, which powerfully affected those blessed to see him that day. He was welcomed into the city to happy cries of 'Hosanna!', a Jewish phrase of adoration and praise, and 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. They threw palm leaves at his feet to cover his path, just as we in India strew flowers on the path of those we wish to ceremonially welcome.

The descriptions I read of Palm Sunday painted a vivid picture in my mind, and my fondness for it was sealed when I read a poem by the early 20th-century English writer G K Chesterton. I had already read and enjoyed his books on priest-detective Father Brown, which I devoured from my father's bookshelves. And one day, I came upon Chesterton's poem *The Donkey*, in which a donkey representing all donkeyhood, says how they are 'the tattered outlaw of the earth', scorned and abused by all as 'the devil's walking parody of all four-footed things'. But the last, climactic verse is positively incandescent: 'Fools! For I also had my hour; one far fierce hour and sweet: there was a shout about my ears; and palms before my feet.'

That last verse is about Palm Sunday from the donkey's point of view, and the poem lodged straight away with me as a favourite, both out of sympathy for the donkey and the thrill that the last verse conveyed of that sunny, festive morning long ago in ancient Jerusalem. As to which, baby donkeys were apparently the equivalent of cuddly teddy bears in ancient India. A person conversant with Sanskrit also told me that baby donkeys were called 'priyadarshi', meaning 'dear to behold'.

But why did Jesus go to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover? Of course, because he was Jewish, and also sensed he would die there, but what was the significance of that festival? It falls this year from the evening of Wednesday, April 1 to Thursday, April 9 which lets me convey warm Passover greetings to all Jewish readers.

Passover, called Pesach in Hebrew, commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, where they were enslaved by the Pharaohs. They were so crushed and exhausted by their daily forced labour and whippings that they were in no mental state to seek their god Yahweh, or think spiritual thoughts. So, Yahweh sought them out and came to their rescue. He told Moses to lead his people out of exile. Before that, he sent ten plagues to Egypt.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Palm Sunday marks the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem to observe the Jewish festival of Passover which resonates with Indian belief that god, from time to time, comes to save people from atrocities. The gathering involves a retelling of the exodus and eating special foods that evoke the supreme sacrifice

According to the *Shemot* or Book of Exodus in the Torah, Yahweh commanded Moses to tell the Israelites to slaughter a lamb and mark their door frames with its blood, and eat the lamb for dinner. For that night, he would send the Angel of Death to execute the tenth plague, in which he would smite all the firstborn in Egypt. But when the angel saw the blood on the Israelites' doorframes, he would pass over their homes to spare them the plague. Hence, the name Passover.

This resonates with Indian belief, as in the idea that god himself comes to save us from age to age. The Passover gathering, called Seder, which I have attended in Delhi, involves retelling the story of the exodus and eating special foods that evoke it. A Seder plate usually has six items, including boiled eggs, symbolising revival and zeroa, a roasted lamb shank or chicken wing. It is the only meat on the Seder plate, symbolising the Paschal Lamb or Korban Pesach, as the Passover sacrifice is called in Hebrew. This meat symbolises the sacrifice of the lamb whose blood was painted on the doorway of the Israelite slaves' houses to deflect the Angel of Death. Thus, Jesus himself came to be called the Paschal Lamb or sacrificial Lamb of God, for dying on the cross.

The chief Seder items, which Jesus, too, would have eaten, are maror or bitter herbs, recalling the suffering of the Jews in Egypt. Their word for Egypt is Mitzrayim, 'the narrow place', from which Hindi gets the word 'Misr' for Egypt.

The second must-have on the Seder plate is charoset, a sweet, brown mixture symbolising the brick and mortar enslaved Jews used to construct buildings in Egypt. Charoset is made of chopped nuts, apples, dates or figs, cinnamon and sweet red wine.

Moses says in Deuteronomy 24:18-19: "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. When you are harvesting in your field, and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands"—the compassion that is also at the heart of the Gospel of Christ.

One cannot think of Palm Sunday without recalling Passover and the divine assurance they both seek to convey.

(Views are personal)
(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Overloading economy

Ref: *India's missed and messed opportunities* (Mar 29). The column should be an eye-opener with these facts being hidden to the general public. Moreover, the burden on the economy can be managed by regulating soaring electioneering expenditure and dole handouts.
Ramesh Vipparthi, email

Disconnected diplomacy

Ref: *At crossroads of global trust* (Mar 29). S Jaishankar's balancing act has kept India's strategic options open—no small achievement in a fragmenting world. Yet, Pakistan's mediation success exposed a deeper gap: protocol expertise without domestic political grounding eventually produces diplomacy disconnected from strategic instinct. Foreign policy requires elected accountability, not just eloquence.
A Myilsami, Coimbatore

Policy seriousness

Ref: *Cue in tech solutions to break queues* (March 29). Queue management through technology is not a distant aspiration—Tirupati and Vaishno Devi have already demonstrated it works at scale. The solutions exist. What is missing is the institutional seriousness to implement them consistently across government services. The Delhi Metro's efficiency is proof of what is achievable when agencies commit fully. Replicating that discipline in civic bodies remains the real challenge.
Abbharna Barathi, email

Inflation burden

Ref: *Fuel price cushion tough to maintain if crude keeps rising* (March 28). Oil marketing firms in India have demonstrated robust profitability under market-linked pricing, attributing their current stress to policy restraint. By delaying retail price adjustments, the State effectively transfers the burden of inflation management onto them. If fuel pricing is to serve as a tool of macroeconomic stabilisation, its costs must be transparently borne. If not, such firms must be allowed genuine autonomy.
Sanjeev Jha, New Delhi

Denied growth

Ref: *Transgender who?* (Mar 29). A narrow definition combined with lack of self-identification, pushes trans individuals further into their closets, when they should be made active participants of Viksit Bharat. Regressive constitutional interpretation combined with legislative and administrative apathy speaks volumes about the same.
Anwesha Mishra, Cuttack

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
Chairman of the Board: **Manoj Kumar Sonthalia** Editor: **Santwana Bhattacharya**
Published by **N Gopalan** on behalf of Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited, at No. 1, Queen's Road, Bengaluru - 560 001 and printed by him at Express Press, Plot No. 2A, Bommasandra Industrial Area, 4th Phase, Survey No. 46, Part Yarandahalli Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk. Bengaluru - 560 099. **Bengaluru.** Vol. 62, No. 75 RNI Reg. No. 3457/1960. Phone: 080-22866893. **Copyright:** Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited.

POSTS OF THE DAY

Piyush Goyal @PiyushGoyal
Our diaspora in Cameroon is a vital bridge bringing our nations closer together. Delighted to address the Indian Community Reception in Cameroon.

Mayawati @Mayawati
The inauguration of the first phase of the Noida airport took place yesterday; its blueprint & foundational works had already begun during my BSP rule

Jairam Ramesh @Jairam_Ramesh
Credit given to the PM for the initiative to protect the Bustard in Gujarat... On June 9, 2010, the-then Union minister had written to the-then CM for conservation

Modi calls for unity to face fallout of West Asia crisis

In 'Mann ki Baat', PM thanks Gulf countries for helping Indian nationals

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed gratitude to Gulf nations for their support to Indians residing there amid ongoing conflicts.

He was addressing his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat'. "Deeply grateful to the Gulf countries; they are providing every possible assistance to more than one crore Indians there," the Prime Minister said on Sunday, describing the global situation as "challenging".

Modi also urged citizens to stand united in overcoming these difficulties. Raising serious concerns about the conflict in West Asia, he stated, "This is undoubtedly a challenging time. I once again urge all my fellow citizens that we must come together as one to overcome this challenge". He further advised people to remain alert and avoid falling prey to rumours.

The PM reflected on recent global hardships, saying, "Remember that the entire world faced myriad problems for a long time on account of COVID. Indeed, all of us had expected that after emerging from the Corona crisis, the world would move forward on the path of renewed progress. However, situations of war and conflict have continuously kept arising in different parts of the world".

Stressing the importance of the conflict-hit region for India's energy needs, the PM said, "On account of that, a crisis is emerging around the world regarding petrol and diesel. Our global relations, the support we receive from various countries, and the strengths the country has built over the past decade have enabled India to bravely confront these circumstances," he said. He criticised attempts to 'politicise' the crisis, urging restraint. "Those who are politicising even this issue should refrain from doing so. This is a matter concerning the interests of 140 crore countrymen and there is no place for "Self-serving politics," he remarked.

Addressing the spread of misinformation, he further added, "Therefore, those who are spreading rumours are causing major harm to the country. I would also appeal to all citizens to remain vigilant and not be misled by rumours. Trust only the continuous information provided by the government and take action based only on that". These repeated appeals come amid a deepening crisis in West Asia and misinformation regarding shortages of energy resources and fuel, he added.

Expressing confidence in the nation, he said, "As always, I am confident that just as we have overcome past crises, this time too, we will emerge victorious from this difficult situation".

Urges public to watch out for misinformation

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Crimes against women on the rise, maximum by husbands and kin: MHA

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in its annual report for 2024-25 has confirmed a steady rise in crimes against women in the country, with the data showing 3,71,503 incidents of crime in 2020, which rose to 4,28,278 in 2021 and 4,45,256 in 2022.

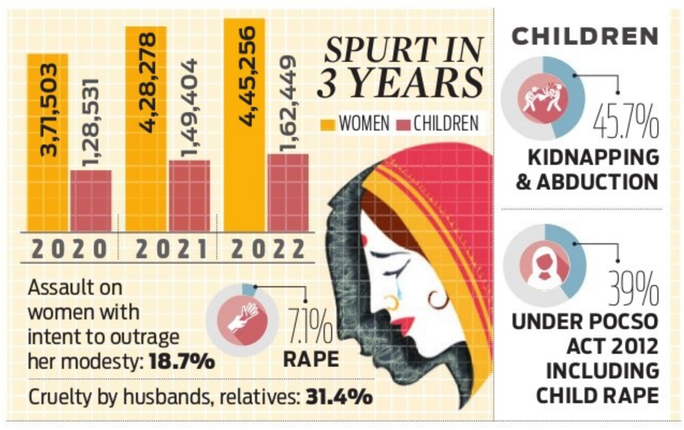
"The majority of cases under crimes against women were reported under 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' (31.4%) followed by 'kidnapping and abduction of women' (19.2%), 'assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' (18.7%) and 'rape' (7.1%)," the report further observed.

The MHA, however, said the increasing trend is mostly because of higher reporting of such crimes due measures like making it mandatory of police to register FIRs, sensitisation of police personnel and increased awareness campaigns.

Noting that many victims of general category crimes like murder, robbery and cheating are women, the report said, "From 2020 to 2021 the crime against women increased by 15% and then 2021 to 2022 it increased by 4% and the proportion of IPC crimes against women were 12.5% in 2022." It said the rate of total crimes against women was 66.4 in 2022 per one lakh of female population.

In cases of crimes against children, there has been steady increase between 2020 and 2022 with 1,28,531 such incidents in 2020, which increased to 1,49,404 in 2021 and 1,62,449, in 2022. "In percentage terms, major crimes against children during 2022 were kidnapping and abduction (45.7%) and cases under the POCSO Act (39%)," the report revealed.

Under the head 'juveniles in conflict with law', MHA said 37,780 minors were apprehended in 30,555 cases.



INSIDER TRACK

Extension buzz on NCLAT members

There is growing talk about extending the tenure of two senior technical members of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal. Both have long backgrounds in administration and finance and joined the tribunal in 2022 on fixed terms. As their terms near an end, formal proposals are being considered to keep them on. If sources are to be believed, formal proposals have been moved for extending the service tenures of Barun Mitra, a 1987-batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, who had earlier served as the Union Law Secretary and Naresh Salecha, a 1984-batch Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS) officer, who had last served in the government as one of the members of the Railway Board.

Nitish camp eyes Delhi shift

Soon after Nitish Kumar signalled his move to the Rajya Sabha, several trusted bureaucrats began seeking central deputation. Key names include Secretary in CMO Anupam Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Education B Rajender, OSD to CM Gopal Singh, and S&T Secretary Pratima S Verma. Their proposals had been pending for over a year, but the state government's recent approval and issuance of NOCs have accelerated the process. The shift suggests an administrative realignment in anticipation of a political transition.

Different paths to power

Bihar and West Bengal show two very different situations for the BJP when it comes to gaining power. In Bihar, after Nitish Kumar decided to stepdown, the BJP is close to having its own chief minister for the first time. In West Bengal, the party is still trying to win power by defeating Mamata Banerjee. The party leadership understands this challenge. In Bihar, the CM will be chosen by party legislators. But in West Bengal, the BJP must win elections and get support from the public to come to power. In both cases, the goal is to make the BJP the main force in power.

Guwahati visit & autonomy concern

The abrupt removal of NSDC International CEO Alok Kumar and a senior official following Secretary, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Debashree Mukherjee's visit to Guwahati has not gone down well. While low enrolment at the newly launched Skill India International Centre is cited as the trigger, insiders say initial ramp-up challenges typical of new centres were overlooked. NSDC International, a subsidiary of NSDC, functions under a public-private partnership model meant to ensure autonomy. However, perceived bureaucratic overreach has dented the organisation's credibility and morale. Many believe it is being run at the whims of officials. The episode has left employees uneasy, raising wider concerns about decision-making and the delicate balance between oversight and independence in PPP institutions.

Training initiative triggers anxiety

A new training programme for technical and senior staff has received mixed feedback, even though its curriculum is progressive. The programme covers topics like understanding self, emotional intelligence, negotiation and conflict resolution, communication skills, and managing stress and anxiety. However, a clause that allows for compulsory nomination if not enough people volunteer has caused concern. What was meant to be an optional development opportunity now seems like it could become mandatory. This has made some officials uncomfortable, creating the same stress the programme is supposed to help with.

Pak still giving refuge to anti-India terror groups, says report at US House

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

PAKISTAN continues to shelter terrorist organisations on its soil, including groups that target India and particularly those focused on Jammu and Kashmir, according to a report.

A report by the US Congressional Research Service titled 'Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan', which flags how terrorism continues to flourish, was put up by the US Congress on March 25. The report stated that twelve of the 15 groups listed are designated as Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) under US law, and most but not all are animated by Islamist extremist ideology. It added that terrorist groups operating or launching attacks are under five broad categories (India and Kashmir-oriented, globally orientated, Afghanistan-oriented, domestically oriented and sectarian anti-Shia).

The report identifies India and Kashmir oriented terror groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Harakat-ul Jihad Islami, Harakat ul-Mujahidin and Hizbul Mujahideen which are continuing to operate from Pakistani territory and posing security challenges. The report reads, "Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) was formed in 1989—reportedly as the militant wing of Pakistan's largest Islamist political party—and designated as an FTO in 2017. It is one of the largest and oldest militant groups operating in Indian-administered Kashmir. HM's cadre of up to 1,500 is composed primarily of ethnic Kashmiris."

HUM in focus

The report names Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM), saying that despite being designated as an FTO in 1997, it operates mainly from PoK and some Pakistani cities. It was responsible for the 1999 hijacking of IC 814 and led to release from prison of JEM's future founder

Army sharpens air defence, drone skills in field exercises

JAVARIA RANA @ New Delhi

AMID the West Asia conflict offering hard lessons on air defence and drone warfare and with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh calling the military to internalise them, the Indian Army has been conducting intensive exercises across its field commands to sharpen its edge in both domains.

Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday witnessed the annual Integrated Air Defence Firepower exercise at the Army Air Defence College, Gopalpur. The Additional Directorate General of Public Information said the exercise "showcased seamless synergy of multifarious air defence weapon systems operating in a networked environment, effectively validating the detection-to-engagement cycle against new-age hybrid aerial threats."

Visuals from the exercise captured the Indo-Israeli MRSAM, DRDO's D4 counter-UAS system, the Zu-23 and L-70 anti-aircraft guns and the radar-guided self-propelled Schilka. Decoys

were also present to simulate hostile aerial targets and test the performance of integrated air defence systems under realistic conditions. "The thrust was not on individual platforms but on how they operate as an integrated network for faster detection and engagement of targets across ranges and altitudes," a source said.

On the same day, Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, speaking in Udhampur, underlined both the enduring primacy of ground dominance and the accelerating technological transformation of the battlefield.

"Decisive victory rests on ground dominance. Warfare has broadened with society, industry and technology now aligning with diplomacy, deterrence, force and political will," he said, adding that "drones, decision weapons, electronic warfare and counter-systems are reshaping combat."

Separately, Western Command, holding operational responsibility along the Pakistan front, on Sunday showcased elements of its II Strike Corps conducting a 72-hour intensive reconnaissance exercise. Mechanised recce troops, equipped with UAVs and advanced surveillance systems rehearsed the pre-assault phase ahead of armoured thrusts. Such troops pushed ahead of the main force to develop the battlespace picture, map enemy positions and guide armour to exploit gaps.

Earlier this month, Southern Command conducted the fortnight-long 'Amogh Jwala' exercise, fielding the Army's first dedicated 'Shaurya' squadron. The Army is currently working to raise such squadrons across its Armoured Corps.

EXPRESS READ

Geographical distance no barrier to justice: CJI

Stressing that access to justice must transcend physical boundaries, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Sunday said that geographical distance should not become a barrier in the delivery of justice. The CJI was speaking after virtually inaugurating a newly constructed district court complex at Kargil from Leh, marking a significant milestone in the judicial infrastructure of the Union territory of Ladakh.

Minister calls for boost in de-addiction efforts

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Virendra Kumar on Sunday called for intensifying preventive efforts, scaling up de-addiction services and expanding the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, according to a statement. Kumar chaired the fifth meeting of the National Consultative Committee on De-addiction and Rehabilitation (NCCDR) held at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.

GOVT INCENTIVES PUT INDIA'S FOOD STORY AT A TURNING POINT

OPINION

AVINASH JOSHI
Secretary, Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries

INDIA today stands at an important moment in its economic journey. As the nation moves towards becoming one of the world's largest economies, growth must increasingly be measured not only by the quantity we produce but by the value we create.

A very few sectors reflect this transformation more clearly than the food processing sector. India is among the largest producers of food grains, fruits, vegetables, milk and marine products. For decades, our agricultural strength ensured food security for the nation. Yet a large portion of this produce traditionally moved directly from farm to market with limited value addition.

Today, only about 12–13 percent of India's agricultural produce undergoes processing. This gap between production and processing represents one of the largest opportunities in the Indian economy.

The next phase of India's food journey is therefore clear: to transform agricultural abundance into high-value, globally competitive food products.

Recognising this opportunity, the government launched the production-linked incentive scheme for food processing industry in March 2021 with a financial outlay of ₹10,900 crore. The scheme is being implemented over a six-year period from 2021-22 to 2026-27 by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

The core idea behind the scheme is simple but powerful:reward companies that invest in expanding food processing capacity, innovation and global branding and ultimately the schemes creates multiple global food manufacturing champions from Indiafunding them for investing in In-store branding, Shelf space in international retail chains and Global marketing campaigns

Strategic Design: Building a Modern Food Ecosystem

The PLISFPI scheme has been carefully structured around three key pillars.

Incentivising High-Potential Food Segments

The first component focuses on scaling production in major food categories such asReady-to-Cook and Ready-to-Eat foods, Processed fruits and vegetables, Marine products

These categories represent areas where India can rapidly expand both domestic consumption and export potential.

Encouraging Innovation and MSME Participation

The second component supports innovative and organic food products developed by MSMEs. Small and medium enterprises form the backbone of India's food sector, and their integration into modern supply chains is essential for inclusive growth.

In 2023, the International Year of Millets, the Ministry introduced a special initiative under the PLI scheme to encourage the use of millets in ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products.

Millets are climate-resilient, highly nutritious and deeply rooted in India's agricultural traditions.

By integrating millets into modern processed foods, the scheme simultaneously promotes nutrition security and climate-resilient agriculture.

The progress achieved under the PLI scheme in a short period reflects its strong industry response and policy effectiveness.

So far:

- 165 companies have been approved under the scheme.
- 68 of these are MSMEs, apart from40 contract manufacturers of large companies.
- A cumulative investment of ₹9,207 crore has already been made.
- Around 35 lakh metric tonnes per year of new processing and preservation capacity has been created.
- The scheme has generated 3.29 lakh jobs, both direct and indirect.

The next phase of India's food journey is therefore clear: to transform agricultural abundance into high-value, globally competitive food products. Recognising this opportunity, the government launched the production-linked incentive scheme for food processing industry in March 2021

Notably, the original employment target of the scheme was 2.5 lakh jobs. The sector has already achieved 131 percent of this target.

Sale of processed agricultural products from PLI-supported companies have also recorded a compound annual growth rate of 13.23 percent since 2019–20.

(Export rank growth is 7.41% since 2019-20)

The Production Linked Incentive framework covers 14 sectors across the Indian economy. Among them, the PLI for food processing has emerged as one of the most impactful.

Despite accounting for only around 8 to 9 percent of total PLI subsidy disbursement, the food processing sector has generated nearly 42 percent of the employment created across PLI schemes.

So far, ₹2715 crore incentives have been released under the scheme, representing around 25 percent of the total outlay.

It proves food processing is one of the most employment-intensive sectors in India's manufacturing ecosystem.

Responding to Changing Consumer Lifestyles

India's demographic transformation is also shaping the food industry.

A young, urbanising population increasingly demands:

- convenient food solutions
- hygienic packaging
- safe and nutritious ready-to-eat products

Working professionals in cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai or Delhi often seek quality ready-to-cook or ready-to-eat meals that align with fast-paced lifestyles.

India's agricultural abundance is one of its greatest strengths. The challenge before us is to convert this abundance into sustainable economic value.The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry is helping accelerate this transition and the journey from food security to global food leadership is going to be manifested soon.

(Views are personal)

CHEETAH

Mukhi, the first cheetah born in India following an ambitious reintroduction programme that began in September 2022 in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, turned three on Sunday.

3 KILLED | THREE HURT IN TWO ROAD ACCIDENTS IN UP

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	38	24	Mumbai	31	26
Bhopal	37	21	Panaji	32	25
Jaipur	36	19	Patna	36	21
Amritsar	28	15	Lucknow	36	20
Chennai	34	25	Port Blair	31	26
Kolkata	35	24	Imphal	23	15
Srinagar	05	-2	Chandigarh	37	18

83 assistant returning officers, 174 police station chiefs transferred on the counsel of state CEO ● Focus on illegal immigrants in next term

EC REJIGS POLL TEAMS IN BLOCKS

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

THE Election Commission (EC) on Sunday removed 83 Block Development Officers (BDOs) who were serving as Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) in different districts of West Bengal and 174 officers-in-charge (OCs) of police stations, in a fresh move to shift officials 24 days ahead of the Assembly polls to be held in the state on April 23 and 29.

The OCs shifted include 31 from Kolkata, including the police in-charge of Bhabanipur, the constituency of CM Mamata Banerjee. The EC has directed the state Chief Secretary to implement the transfer and posting of the OCs, BDOs and AROs. It took the step following a proposal by state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Agarwal.

The highest number of transfers, 14 BDOs and AROs, were in East Midnapore, followed by 11 in South 24 Parganas. Two of the transferred officials were posted under Nandigram constituency in East Midnapore, where Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari has been renominated by the BJP. Adhikari had defeated Banerjee in the 2021 polls.

Earlier, the EC had transferred several senior bureaucrats, including Chief Secretary Nandini Chakraborty and Home Secretary J P Meena, along with IPS officers such as DGP Peeyush Pandey and the Kolkata Police Commissioner.

"Transfers of bureaucrats, IPS officers and other administrative officials involved in the election process are not new. These measures are taken ahead of every election to ensure that people can exercise their voting rights freely, without fear or favour," a sources in the CEO office said, requesting anonymity. "This time, the EC has decided to take strict action if any officer is found displaying partisan behaviour while carrying out election duties. We want every officer involved in the process to act impartially and without favouring any political party," the source added.

Earlier this week, the EC had appointed ROs in 73 constituencies, including Bhabanipur. The removal of the RO in Bhabanipur had prompted Banerjee to question the neutrality of the Election commission. Surajit Roy, a BDO from Nandigram, was appointed as the RO in Bhabanipur. The TMC alleged that Roy had links with Suvendu and lodged a complaint with the election commission.

In another move, the election commission suspended three jawans on charges of playing carrom inside a TMC office in Suri of Birbhum district in violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The Election commission acted after a video of the incident went viral on social media. This newspaper could not independently verify the authenticity of the video.

Opposition parties, including the BJP and CPI(M), raised concerns over the incident, questioning whether fair elections could be ensured. "The EC has taken swift action after learning about the matter. Such prompt and strict measures can sensitise jawans and prevent unethical practices during the enforcement of the MCC," BJP spokesperson Bimalshankar Nanda said.

On 26 March, the EC had taken action against seven jawans in Murshidabad for allegedly attending an Iftar gathering. Transfer orders were issued for all seven personnel.

CRPF personnel check a vehicle as part of security arrangements in Bengal | PTI

BJP will impose food curbs: Didi

Sharpening her attacks on the BJP, West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said that the saffron party would impose restrictions on people's dietary choices if it comes to power in the state. She was responding to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's chargesheet at a rally in Purnalia. While addressing in an election campaign rally in Manbazar in Purulia district this afternoon alleged, "People will not be able to eat fish, meat and eggs at their own dietary preferences if BJP comes to power in the state. BJP has already banned eating fish, meat and eggs in states where they rule. Who are you to restrict people to eat food of their choices?"

Infiltration fully stopped in Assam, UCC to start after elections, says Shah

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Jorhat

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the BJP had put an end to infiltration in Assam, and sought five more years to remove the existing illegal immigrants from the state. He also asserted that a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) will be implemented in the state.

Addressing an election rally at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district, Shah said the infiltrators were taking away the jobs of the Assamese youth. "Ten years have elapsed but we could not complete our drive against infiltrators. We have stopped infiltration and no infiltrator can enter Assam now. However, that is not enough. Those who infiltrated have to be driven out," Shah said.

In another rally at Tihu, Shah said UCC will be implemented in the state to "ban four marriages among a particular community."

Training his gun on the Congress, Shah said it had introduced the controversial Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act to encourage infiltration in Assam. The Act was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2005. Shah said the Congress had for years opened doors for infiltrators in Assam but CM Sarma closed the state's borders for infiltrators. "The Congress had changed Assam's demography.

Nine districts, including Dhubri, are now filled with infiltrators. Muslims have become the majority community in these districts. No matter how much (Congress leaders) Rahul Gandhi and Gaurav Gogoi try, we will drive out the infiltrators," Shah said at another rally at Tihu.

The EC is conducting SIR country-wide to remove the names of the infiltrators but the Congress is opposing it, he said. "But don't be afraid, there is the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. We will detect all infiltrators, one by one, delete their names from electoral rolls, and deport them to where they came from, so that they cannot come back," he said.

Shah asked Gogoi, the Assam Congress president, to clarify to the voters if he is with the infiltrators or against them, stating that the two cannot go hand in hand. He said the BJP government reclaimed 1.25 lakh acres of government land from infiltrators. He also slammed the Congress for allegedly not honouring former CM Gopinath Bordoloi.

Cong chief Mallikarjun Kharge at a rally in Naoboicha on Sunday | PTI

Justice for Zubeen in 100 days, ₹50k for biz women: Cong

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Jorhat

THE Congress rolled out five guarantees for election-bound Assam on Sunday, promising among others justice for the late singer-musician Zubeen Garg within 100 days of coming to power. "If a Congress government is installed, we will ensure justice for Zubeen Garg within 100 days. We will uncover who murdered him and present the findings within that time," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, addressing a party rally at Nowboicha in Lakhimpur district.

Garg died while swimming in the sea in Singapore on September 19 last year. CM Himanta Biswa Sarma earlier claimed that the singer was murdered as part of a conspiracy. However, a coroner's court in Singapore later stated that he had drowned accidentally.

Sarma fled to save himself, alleges Kharge

Attacking Sarma, the Congress chief said. "He was in the Tarun Gogoi ministry and one day, he fled to the BJP. Why did he leave? Did he leave for your welfare, maintain peace in Assam? He fled to save himself."

The other guarantees of the Congress are ₹50,000 to women to start or grow businesses, ₹1,250 per month pension for senior citizens, conversion of "eksoniya pattas" into "miyadi pattas" for 10 lakh indigenous people and ₹25 lakh cashless health cover for every family.

According to Kharge, money that the BJP gives to people is conditional, as it allegedly checks their political affiliation. But, he said, the Congress gives it without any condition. He said the Congress has implemented ₹25 lakh health cover guarantee in various states. "Their (BJP's) guarantees are stealing and ignoring whatever is happening indiscriminately in the country. They were brought to power in the country and in this region for good governance but they learned to steal," Kharge alleged.

Gangsters skip 'desi' weapons in Punjab

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

THE Punjab Police are now facing a new challenge as gangsters are gradually replacing Madhya Pradesh's country-made 'desi katas' with weapons smuggled from neighbouring Pakistan. On Monday, two 9 mm sub-machine guns along with an empty magazine were seized, while 10 pistols were confiscated recently.

In the last three years, 2,300 illegal weapons have been seized, and out of these, 800 were smuggled from the Khyber Pass region of Pakistan, 'designed for high-impact terrorist and criminal operations'. In the latest incident, Amritsar Commissionerate Police foiled an illegal arms smuggling attempt with the recovery of two 9 mm sub-machine guns and one empty magazine.

DGP, Punjab, Gaurav Yadav, said here on Sunday that the recovered weapons were found marked with "GHAFFAR SECURITY". He said that preliminary investigation has revealed that the recovered consignment was linked to notorious gangster Gurpreet Singh alias Goldy Dhillon. The weapons were being supplied through his network for carrying out anti-national and criminal activities in the state.

Yadav said that further investigation is underway to identify the absconding accused and dismantle the entire network.

Sharing operational details, Amritsar Commissioner of Police, Gurpreet Singh Bhullar, said that acting on specific intelligence, police teams laid a strong barricade in the area of Guru Ki Wadali in Chheharta, and attempted to intercept two unidentified youth riding a motorcycle.

On spotting police, the suspects panicked and attempted to flee, he said, while adding that during their escape, they dropped a kit bag. He said that a search of the recovered kit bag led to the recovery of two illegal 9 mm sub-machine guns and one empty magazine.

Yadav said that gangster Gurpreet Singh, alias Goldy Dhillon, is involved in multiple serious crimes, including murder, robbery, attempted murder, kidnapping, rioting, extortion and illegal arms supply. Police teams have booked Gurpreet and his three associates, and raids are being conducted to nab the absconding bike-borne persons, he added.

In this regard, a case has been registered under section 25(I-A) of the Arms Act at Police Station Chheharta in Amritsar.

While only two days back, 10 pistols were seized, which included one Turkey-made Zigana pistol, one Austria-made Glock pistol, two US-made Beretta pistols, five PX5 pistols, and one Norinco pistol.

3.7K KANALS OF KASHMIRI PANDIT LAND RETRIEVED

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

A total of 3,729 kanals of land belonging to Kashmiri Pandits, who migrated en masse from the Valley after the eruption of militancy in 1990, have been retrieved from the encroachers in the Valley so far.

According to the government, the land measuring 3,129 kanals and 4 marlas of land belonging to migrant Kashmiri Pandits has been retrieved across the valley and restored to the rightful owners. Of the total land retrieved, 844 kanals and 4 marlas of land were retrieved from encroachers since November 2024.

Of 844 kanals and 4 marlas of Pandit land retrieved in over two years, the highest 283 kanals were retrieved from south Kashmir's Shopian district, followed by Baramulla with 225 kanals of land, Ganderbal with 146 kanals, Kulgam with 73 kanals, Pulwama with 63 kanals, Bandipora with 19 kanals, Anantnag with 15 kanals, Budgam with 8 kanals, Kupwara with 7 kanals and Srinagar with 3 kanals.

Kashmiri Pandits migrated en masse from the Valley after the eruption of militancy in 1990. Most of them live in Jammu, while some have settled outside J&K. According to official figures, about 60,000 families migrated from the valley.

MP to base religious site planning on Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor

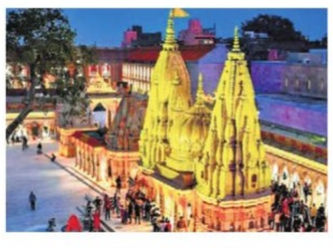
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

ONE of the oldest living cities worldwide and also Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, is set to witness a decisive step towards strengthening Madhya Pradesh-Uttar Pradesh collaboration.

On March 31, Varanasi will host UP-MP Sahyog Sammellan-2026, aiming for inter-state cooperation with a concrete, result-orientated and globally aligned approach.

The day-long event, which will be attended by chief minister Dr Mohan Yadav, will facilitate dialogue between representatives of the neighbouring states on key themes, integrating ODOP, GI-tagged products, traditional crafts, export-orientated products, investment and tourism to build a comprehensive economic ecosystem.

While the day-long event will include wide-ranging discussions on variegated themes, it will start with MPs' attempts to take cues from the systems and procedures at Varanasi's world-famous Kashi Vishwanath Temple for thorough development of its religious sites.



MoUs to be signed

During the conclave, MoUs will be signed between the states to formalise cooperation in trade, industrial investment, skill development, and tourism. These agreements will be implemented on ground for new opportunities.

CM Yadav will lead his state's delegation for a study visit to the temple. During the visit, aspects such as crowd flow design, infrastructure layout and pilgrim management systems will be closely examined. Based on these learnings, Madhya Pradesh will develop a practical approach for the development of its religious sites.

The visit attains particular importance in view of the MP's concrete planning for making Ujjain Simhastha-2028 a grand experience for pilgrims from across the world.

Later in the day, the conclave will especially focus on linking ODOP and GI-tagged products, traditional crafts, agricultural and food products with branding, marketing and exports. A presentation on UP's ODOP initiative and its economic impact will highlight how local products can be made competitive in global markets.

Mizo orphan wins tribal weightlifting gold

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

ISAK Malsawmtluanga was almost on the verge of quitting weightlifting after losing both his parents even before he turned 16. The dual tragedy left the Mizo teenager devastated, but the support from his childhood coach and his uncle and aunt helped salvage his sporting career. The 18-year-old made all of them proud by bagging the men's 60 kg gold medal at the ongoing Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 in Raipur.

Isak's father Heming Malsawmtluanga had died in a bike accident in 2018, the same year when he began training to become a weightlifter. This meant that the only son in the family was left wondering whether he should continue to train or focus on earning money. "At that time my childhood coach Soma motivated me a lot and asked me to continue weightlifting," Isak stated.

But just when Isak's performance graph began to flourish and he won a silver medal in the 60 kg category at the Youth National Championships held in Himachal Pradesh in 2024, another personal setback followed. His mother was diagnosed with cancer, placing the family under severe emotional and financial strain.

Training bore fruit despite hardships faced

Since 2024, Isak has been training at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence in Imphal, while pursuing his Class 12 studies through the Indira Gandhi National Open School in Aizawl.

During this difficult phase, Isak's uncle and aunt stepped in to support him. The couple, who work at a small local restaurant in Aizawl's Ramhlun Vengthar locality, took him under their care and ensured he could continue his studies and pursue weightlifting without interruption. "Losing both my parents broke me completely from inside," he said and further stated, "I had almost decided to quit weightlifting, but my uncle and coach once again persuaded me to continue."

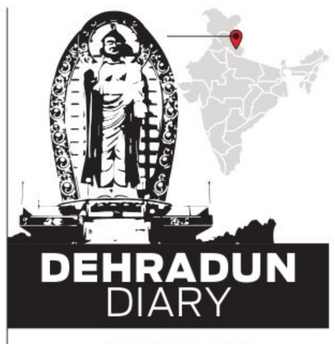
Since 2024, Isak has been training at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence in Imphal, while pursuing his Class 12 studies through the Indira Gandhi National Open School in Aizawl.

Gradually, the results began to follow. He went on to add another silver medal at a junior event in Modinagar in 2025 and later secured a bronze medal at the National Weightlifting Championships the same year.

Even his build-up to the Khelo India Tribal Games-2026 had its share of challenges.

While preparing for the Games, Isak suffered a back injury during training, prompting his coach to advise him to skip the tournament to avoid worsening the problem.

However, determined not to let another obstacle derail him, Isak stepped onto the platform in Raipur and delivered the best performance of his life.



DEHRADUN DIARY

NARENDRA SETHI

Our correspondent in Uttarakhand

narendrasethi@newindianexpress.com

Pushing for all-season tourism in U'khand

CM Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday outlined his vision to transform Uttarakhand into a premier 'all-season tourism destination.' Beyond just scenic beauty, the state is aggressively expanding infrastructure, enhancing road connectivity, and upgrading digital amenities to ensure year-round accessibility. The strategy hinges on empowering locals through rural tourism, homestays, and religious circuits, effectively turning tourism into a powerful engine for employment in remote areas. The results are already promising: winter tourism has seen an unprecedented surge, with over 1.5 lakh visitors braving the cold.

Priyanka Khantwal's ticket to Tollywood

Priyanka Khantwal, a talented performer from Bandkhani, Pauri Garhwal, is making waves in the entertainment industry. A seasoned dancer and reality TV star known for her appearances on Jodi Season 11, Dance India Dance: Champion Double Dose, and Dance Plus 5, she has successfully transitioned to the silver screen. She is now making her debut in the Kannada film Wild Tiger Safari. The film's bilingual track, Trendingg, has already garnered attention on social media. Daughter of a retired Indian Air Force officer, Priyanka's journey from the mountains of Uttarakhand to the world of South Indian cinema serves as an inspiring example.

Tech-savvy heritage revival in Garhwal

The IIT Roorkee has breathed new life into a century-old cowshed in Faldakot, Pauri Garhwal. Led by architect-scientist Namrata Kandwal—a 'Global Housing Technology Challenge' winner—the project utilised innovative hempcrete panels to restore the structure. This sustainable, earthquake-resistant method allows for full cottage assembly in just 10 hours, offering a blueprint for future rural homestays. Under the aegis of the 'Go-Hemp' startup, this initiative aims to reduce environmental degradation from rampant blasting in the Himalayas. By developing hemp-based building materials, the team hopes to foster self-reliance in construction.

7,30,000
barrels of crude aboard Anatoly Kolodkin nears Cuba, defying US oil blockade

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	21	1	SNY	Los Angeles	20	12	SNY
Colombo	28	24	SNY	Melbourne	26	15	LC
Dhaka	31	19	SNY	Moscow	4	2	SNY
Dubai	26	21	SNY	New York	7	2	SNY
Houston	31	19	TDS	Singapore	28	25	TDS
Istanbul	33	21	SNY	Toronto	1	-5	SNY
London	13	9	SNY	Washington	3	-2	SNY

Pentagon plans weeks-long ground ops: *Post*

Operation includes raids on Kharg Island and Hormuz coastal sites; Trump has not yet approved any deployment

WASHINGTON

THE Pentagon is preparing plans for weeks of ground operations in Iran — potentially including raids on Kharg Island and coastal sites near the Strait of Hormuz — though Donald Trump has not yet approved any deployment, the *Washington Post* reported on Saturday.

Any ground operation would stop short of a full-scale invasion, instead involving raids by special operations forces and conventional infantry troops, the Post said, citing unnamed officials.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted on Friday the United States "can achieve all of our objectives without ground troops," but the Post said planning is advanced, with one official saying: "This is not last-minute planning."

According to the Post, the potential operations could see a mixture of special forces and conventional infantry sent to conduct extended raids into coastal areas near the Strait of Hormuz, including seizing islands controlled by the Islamic Republic and holding them for an extended period of time.

Experts have warned that holding territory would put American soldiers in significantly more danger than they've faced so far in the war, which has already seen 13 US service-members killed in action, and more than 300 wounded.

The Israeli military said on Sunday that overnight it had attacked a key production facility in Tehran used by Iran's defence ministry to manufacture components for ballistic missiles. "The site is one of only two of its kind in Iran where critical components were developed for the assembly and operationalisation of missiles set to launch toward the state of Israel," the military said.

The strikes also targeted facilities linked to ballistic missile engines, drone manufacturing, air defence systems and missile storage.

First responders search an office building that housed the offices of the Doha-headquartered news network *Al Araby TV* following a missile strike in Tehran | AFP

WAR WATCH

Churches shut during Easter

Jerusalem's major holy sites are shuttered and families are dejected and exhausted ahead of Passover and Easter as the Iran war enters its fifth week. The mood stands in stark contrast to a usual spring, when longer days herald a period of family gatherings and an influx of tourists for the major Jewish and Christian holidays.

Police block Palm Mass

Israeli police barred Catholic leaders from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for Palm Sunday Mass, citing safety concerns amid the Iran war. The Latin Patriarchate called the move disproportionate, noting limited private services were already allowed.

Key holy sites remain shut under missile threat. Benjamin Netanyahu denied malicious intent and said efforts are underway to allow restricted worship in the coming days.

Israel confirms strikes on Iran's nuclear and missile sites

DUBAI: Iran said its nuclear facilities were attacked Friday, hours after Israel warned it would escalate strikes. Israel confirmed targeting sites linked to Iran's nuclear and missile programmes. Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation said the Arak heavy water complex and a yellowcake plant in Yazd were hit, but reported no casualties or contamination. The Israeli military said the strikes dealt a major blow to Iran's capabilities. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps warned of retaliation, with a senior commander cautioning the response would go beyond "an eye for an eye," raising fears of wider regional escalation and prolonged conflict, as global powers urge restraint and diplomacy.

Drone attacks target US consulate, bases in Irbil

BAGHDAD: Drones and interceptions rattled Irbil overnight Saturday as attacks targeted the US consulate and nearby bases in Iraq's Kurdish region. Explosions were heard for hours, with journalists reporting one of the most intense assault periods since the war began. At least one drone was seen heading toward American facilities before being shot down. Iran-aligned militias have escalated repeated drone and missile strikes on US positions, including in Irbil. The US condemned the attacks as "despicable terrorist acts," also citing a strike earlier on Kurdish President Nechirvan Barzani's residence. The attack caused material damage but no casualties, as the residence was empty at the time, officials said.

Pakistan backs Saudi, hosts four-nation talks to push peace

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday reaffirmed "full and unwavering" support for Saudi Arabia, praising the Kingdom's "remarkable restraint" during the West Asia conflict. He conveyed the message during talks with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, recalling engagements with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Pakistan also hosted a quadrilateral meeting with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkiye to discuss the crisis and push for peace. The foreign ministers reviewed the regional situation, security concerns and options for de-escalation, though no joint statement was issued. Sharif stressed unity among Islamic nations and reiterated commitment.

Cyclone knocks out key Australia LNG plant

SYDNEY

AT least one of the world's largest LNG plants remained closed on Sunday after a cyclone knocked out power to thousands of people in western Australia. The outages were restricting already stretched fuel supplies caused by the war in the West Asia.

Woodside Energy, which processes fuel from one of the world's biggest offshore gas operations, said on Sunday its Karratha plant remained offline. "We have commenced remobilising our workforce to some of our offshore facilities and inspections will inform startup processes and timing," a spokesperson for Woodside said. "Production at the North West Shelf Project will recommence once it is safe to do so."

The spokesperson said its Macedon and Pluto sites remained open. Energy giant Chevron has said it suffered outages at its Gorgon and Wheatstone gas plants, which collectively supply more than five percent of the world's liquefied natural gas. Chevron did not immediately respond to AFP questions about the status of the plants on Sunday. Australia is one of the world's largest LNG exporters, supplying Asian nations reeling from fuel disruptions caused by Iran's Strait of Hormuz blockade. Tropical Cyclone Narelle whipped up winds of 200 kilometres per hour and destroyed several homes. *AFP*

Police personnel clash with supporters of former prime minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, during a protest against his arrest in Kathmandu | AFP

Court extends Oli custody by 5 days; protests intensify

KATHMANDU

A Nepal court on Sunday extended by five days the detention of former prime minister KP Sharma Oli and his home minister after their arrest over alleged involvement in a deadly crackdown on the 2025 protests that ousted him.

Oli, 74, and ex-home minister Ramesh Lekhak were arrested in pre-dawn raids on Saturday, a day after Prime Minister Balendra Shah was sworn in following the first elections since the September uprising.

They were arrested over their alleged involvement in the protest crackdown that killed at least 76 people, though neither man has been charged, and both deny responsibility for the violence. "The court has decided to permit five days extension," Kathmandu District Court information officer Deepak Kumar Shrestha told AFP.

Shrestha noted that the court has also said the former prime minister should get the medical care he requires. Oli appeared in court via video-link from a hospital on Sunday, where he was admitted on Saturday following a procedural check-up.

Police said Oli has heart and kidney issues. AFP reporters saw him being taken to a hospital on Saturday after his arrest, surrounded by a heavy police guard. The Supreme Court is due on Monday to consider a petition for Oli and Lekhak's release, court spokesman Arjun Prasad Koirala said.

The arrests of Oli and Lekhak came after an inquiry commission recommended that the four-time ex-prime minister and other officials be prosecuted for failing to stop security forces from firing on demonstrators.

Report says Oli, Lekhak denied knowledge to shift blame, amounts to "criminal negligence". Ex-energy minister Deepak Khadka was also detained on Sunday "in a case relating to money laundering", Central Investigation Bureau spokesman Shiva Kumar Shrestha said. *AFP*

STREETS FILL WITH DISSENT

Large crowds protested against the war in Iran and US President Donald Trump's actions in 'No Kings' rallies across the US and Europe. A giant inflatable balloon depicting Trump as a baby in diapers was seen during a march in Los Angeles. Minnesota took centre stage, with thousands standing shoulder-to-shoulder to protest his aggressive immigration policies | AFP

Russia reports fire at major Baltic export hub after Ukrainian strike

MOSCOW

A drone strike claimed by Ukraine triggered a fire at Russia's Baltic port of Ust-Luga as the regional governor on Sunday reported new damage at the major exporting hub hit for a second time in days.

Ukraine has intensified retaliatory attacks on Russian infrastructure—including refineries, oil depots and ports—saying they are justified as part of the effort to cut revenues funding Russia's offensive.

"There is damage to the port of Ust-Luga. There were no casualties," Russian regional governor Alexander Drozdenko said on social media.

He said that rescuers were working to extinguish a fire at the port, a key hub for Russian fertilisers, oil and coal exports. Thirty six drones were destroyed overnight in the region, Drozdenko added.

Rescuers working to extinguish fire

Russian regional governor Alexander Drozdenko said that rescuers were working to extinguish a fire at the port, a key hub for Russian fertilisers, oil and coal exports. Thirty six drones were destroyed overnight in the region

Ukraine's SBU security service later Sunday claimed the attack saying its drones "successfully struck" the Ust-Luga oil terminal. "The SBU, together with the Defence Forces, continues systematic work to reduce the enemy's financial and logistical capabilities," acting head of the SBU, Yevgeny Khmara, said in a statement. "Russia will pay a high price for its aggression," Khmara said, vowing that such attacks "will continue".

The northwestern port suffered damage this week when it was targeted by drones in a previous attack claimed by Ukraine's military. "Over the past week the SBU has already successfully struck the enemy's oil infrastructure in the Baltic Sea four times," the security service said. Ukraine on Monday claimed an attack on another major Russian Baltic port, Primorsk. The black smoke from the fire could be seen on satellite images. A Ukrainian drone also killed a man in Russia's Belgorod region, its governor said.

The civilian was killed after two drone strikes hit the border city of Grayvoron, Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said on Telegram, blaming the Ukrainian military.

Belgorod, which borders Ukraine's Kharkiv, has frequently been hit with drone attacks, with Russian officials reporting multiple civilian injuries and damage to homes and vehicles there. *AFP*

North Korea tests engine for missile that can hit US

SEOUL

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed a test of an upgraded, high-thrust, solid-fuel engine for weapons and hailed it as a signficant development to boost the country's strategic military capability, state media reported Sunday. While the test was in line with Kim's stated goal of acquiring more agile, hard-to-detect missiles targeting the United States and its allies, some experts speculate North Korea's claim may be an exaggeration.

The Korean Central News Agency reported Kim watched the ground jet test of the engine using a composite carbon fiber material. It said the engine's maximum trust is 2,500 kilotons, up from about 1,970 kilotons reported in a similar solid-fuel engine test in September.

KCNA reported the test was conducted as part of the country's five-year arms build-up meant to upgrade "strategic strike means," a term referring to nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and other weapons. Kim said the latest engine test had "great significance in putting the country's strategic military muscle on the highest level," according to KCNA. KCNA did not report exactly when or where the test occurred. *AP*

North Korea conducts combustion test of a solid-fuel rocket engine | AFP

ASIA MATTERS

SINGAPORE

CITY'S TAMIL LANGUAGE FEST MARKS 20 YEARS

Singapore's Tamil Language Festival marked its 20th anniversary on Sunday. The latest edition of the festival runs till April 26. On occasion of the 20th anniversary, the Tamil Language Learning and Promotion Committee was officially renamed the Tamil Promotion Council. The new name and logo was unveiled by Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth and Manpower Dinesh Vasu Dash, Straits Times reported. Dinesh chairs the council. During the event, he highlighted the need address the declining number of families speaking Tamil at home in the city state.

FREE MEAL CUT: $2 BN SAVING EXPECTED

The government is hoping to save up to 40 trillion rupiah ($2.3 billion) by cutting back on its free meal programme, an official told AFP on Sunday. As per the *Malaysia Star*, the meals will be distributed for five days a week instead of six, starting March 31, National Nutrition Agency deputy head Nanik Sudaryati Deyang said.

THAILAND

NEW WEATHER SYSTEM TO RAISE TEMP

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) has warned of a heat low-pressure system that is expected to bring very hot weather in some areas of the North, Northeast and Central regions of Thailand. There are also chances of isolated thunderstorms and gusty winds due to strengthening southerly and south-easterly winds over upper Thailand, the TMD warned. "During March 30 to April 3, 2026, rainfall in the South will increase, although hot weather will continue during the day..., as the easterly and southeasterly winds strengthen," the TMD said.

IN THE COURT OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore-560 001
O.A. No. 972/2025

Between: HDFC Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
:AND:
SRI DEEPAK R P SHENOY ...Defendants

To,
1. Deepak R P Shenoy, S/o Sri. Ranjal Panduranga, Aged about 47 years, Flat No.6, Building 11, Shanthi Park Apartments, 100 Feet Road, Jayanagar 9th Block, Bengaluru - 560069
Also at: Deepak R P Shenoy, S/o Sri. Ranjal Panduranga, Aged about 47 years, Accenture Solutions Pvt. Ltd., 8/1, Prestige Technopolis, Adug, Bengaluru - 560029
And also at : Deepak R P Shenoy, S/o Sri. Ranjal Panduranga, Aged about 47 years, Maangalya Prosper Signature, Block 1, Subvention Flat J603, 6th Floor, S.No.57/4, Anjanapura Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru - 560050

2. Teja Shenoy, W/o Deepak R P Shenoy, Aged about 42 years, Flat No.6, Building 11, Shanthi Park Apartments, 100 Feet Road, Jayanagar 9th Block, Bengaluru - 560069
Also at: Teja Shenoy, W/o Deepak R P Shenoy, Aged about 42 years, Accenture Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Tower I, II, III & IV, Near RV Engineering College, Patanegere Village, Bengaluru - 560059
And also at: Teja Shenoy, W/o Deepak R P Shenoy, Aged about 42 years, Maangalya Prosper Signature, Block 1, Subvention Flat J603, 6th Floor, S.No.57/4, Anjanapura Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru - 560050

3. M/s Maangalya Constructions, A Partnership Firm incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, Having its registered office at F1, First Floor, Redtree Classic, 7th B Main, 9th Cross, Narayan Nagar, 3rd Block, Doddakallasandra Post, Off Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru - 560062.

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT UNDER RULE 23 (Viii) OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

WHEREAS the applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions, Act, 1993, against the above defendants for the recovery of sum of Rs. 79,26,898/- (Rupees Seventy Nine Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Eight Hundred And Ninty Eight Only) amount together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.

The above defendant is therefore, hereby directed to before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or through authorized agents in support of their defence to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **21-05-2026 at 10:30 a.m.** as why the relief's prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this day of 27-2-2026.

BY THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
Sd/- REGISTRAR
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2
BANGALORE

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE ADDL, CITY CIVIL AND SESSION JUDGE, AT BENGALURU
COM. O. S. NO. 671/2025

Between : M/S MONEYX FINSERVE PRIVATE LIMITED. ...PLAINTIFF
AND : M/S LINDSEY APPARELS ...DEFENDANT

SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANTS BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

1. M/s LINDSEY APPARELS Ground Floor, No 15, Lakshmi Layout, 2nd Cross, Arekre Mico Layout, Behind Sagar Service Station, Banner ghatta Road, Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka, 560076 GST No. 29AAKFL6369D1ZX
2. Ms. LIDYAKUMARI Partner, M/s Lindsey Apparels #50 Opal Akshaya, Yellanahalli Road, Behind Fullinfaws College, Akshaya Nagar, Bengaluru -560068 PAN No : AMJPL9219P

Whereas the Plaintiff herein has instituted the above suit against you for recovery of legal debt amounting to Rs. 22, 13, 041/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Thirteen Thousand Forty One Only) along with unpaid interest @ 3% p.m. from the date of default till the date of realization and costs of the suit under Order XXXVII of the code of civil Procedure, 1908. You are hereby summoned to appear in this court (CCH-85, COMMERCIAL COURT AT BENGALURU) in person or by a pleader on **21/4/2026 at 11 A.M.** failing which the suit will be determined ex-parte against you. Given under my hand and seal of the court this. 23/03/2026.

By Order of the Court
Sd/- Senior Sheristedar
Commercial Court Unit
City Civil Court, Bangalore

Advocate for Plaintiff MINDFUL LEGAL
H-09, Solus Jain Heig, 1st A Cross, J C Road, Bengaluru - 560027

QuoteExpress

PROBLEMS ARE NOT STOP SIGNS, THEY ARE GUIDELINES

ROBERT H SCHULLER

₹1.14L CR foreign investors pulled out from domestic equities in March, worst monthly outflow, weighed down by West Asia war, weakening rupee and elevated crude oil prices

Fewer credit card reward points from Apr 1

All spending categories no longer earn points; issuers to limit cashbacks, hike fees on utility, wallet transactions

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

COME April 1, lenders HDFC Bank, SBI Card, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank who control nearly 90% of the 117.7 million active credit cards market have announced restricted reward points accruals, as part of their efforts to rationalise redemptions by linking it to spend-linked benefits

The banks aim to ensure better operational efficiencies and profitability after the recent surge in delinquencies in the segment. Credit card rewards have long been one of the key reasons why people would choose a particular card, often making everyday spending feel more valuable. But many banks have revised these benefits now. All spending categories no longer earn points, and redemption rules have become stricter. These changes reflect shifts in the credit card industry and may influence how you use your card, going forward.

Most issuers have also capped redemption at 60,000 points a month from unlimited earlier, apart from limiting cashbacks, increasing fees on utility/wallet transactions, and tightening lounge access norms based on higher minimum spending thresholds, among others.

This means that spending more to earn more rewards points will not help you any longer, especially if you are holding premium cards. Banks will charge you if you are paying utility bills with your credit cards beyond a threshold or if you are paying transport fees or tolls if the amount exceeds ₹75,000 for premium cards or ₹50,000 for other cards. Another change is in calculating reward points for redemptions which has been hiked across the board to the multiples of 4,000 now from 1,000 earlier.

Another noticeable trend is the shift towards category-based rewards. Instead of offering the same reward rate across all spending, many cards now offer higher benefits only on specific categories. You may earn higher rewards for travel bookings, online shopping, or dining but you will earn less or nil if the payment is for rent, wallet loading, or government payments. According to industry experts, these changing trends signal increased focus on profitability and cost optimisation.

This comes amid rising delinquencies in recent quarters and decline in overall monthly spends, which in February dipped 11% to ₹1.8 trillion from ₹1.99 trillion in January, and over ₹2 trillion each in the previous three months. Despite declining spends, overall card additions rose 21% to 117.7 million from the past six months trend when net card additions remained muted.

However, on an annualised basis, spending rose 6% from ₹1.68 trillion, according to Reserve Bank data. Similarly, transaction volume also declined 8.6% from January but grew 24% year on year. According to the RBI, annual spends through credit cards have been exceeding the ₹20 trillion mark for the past many years.

Issuing banks normally fund rewards through interchange and merchant fees. However, rising operational cost and changing payment habits have prompted them to reassess these benefits.

As a result, many are reducing cashback rates, introducing caps, or limiting reward categories, making reward programmes more selective now. Banks are also more cautious in approving new cards, focusing more on credit quality and responsible lending.

IN CONVERSATION

HARDEEP SINGH BRAR
President and chief executive officer, BMW Group India

'We are not blindly chasing No. 1 slot, want it to happen organically'

WITH an industry-beating growth in 2025, notching up sales growth of 14% at 18,000 units year on year, German luxury carmaker BMW has been on high gears in the past four years—vrooming at an annual compounded growth rate (CAGR) of 28% since the pandemic or nearly trebling its volumes from 6,604 units in the Covid-hit 2020 to 18,001 units in 2025. **Hardeep Singh Brar**, President and CEO of BMW India, in an interaction with TNIE's **Benn Kochuveedan** tells he is very sanguine about continuing the top-gear drive in the coming future. **Excerpts**

After more than a decade, you are now very close to your immediate rival, with the gap being just about 1,000 units. How sure are you about sustaining this hot-run?
We've been growing at around 30% CAGR since the pandemic, while the industry growth is much lower. With 18,0001 units, 2025 has been our best-ever, while the industry has been clipping at 4-5% growth, we'd like to continue with the pace. We've been getting higher market share every year and we'd like to continue that climb. We grew by about 14% in 2025 and we'd like to grow at 10% plus in 2026 and hopefully in strong double digits from there on.

In terms of market offensive, what's your launch pipeline for this year?
This year we'll launch 10 big models. Of them, six are all-new models and the rest will be relaunches with big changes. Besides these 10, we'll also have 17 minor changes in the existing product portfolio.

This year we'll launch 10 big models. Of them, six are all-new models and the rest will be relaunches with big changes. Besides these 10, we'll also have 17 minor changes in the existing product portfolio

How many of them will be local assemblies? And where do you stand in terms of localisation?
As much as 95% of our models are assembled locally and most of the proposed new models will also be assembled locally. But I think these percentages will remain same. In terms of localisation, we are 50%. It's very difficult to localise more with smaller volume. But we are reviewing it every year, though we have not kept any target for that.

You've invested about ₹12,500 crore since your entry in early 2006. Are you looking at capacity addition?
No need for capacity augmentation as our installed capacity is 50,000 units and we're producing only about 18,000 units. So we've enough capacity.

We're investing ₹400 crore in retail as we're expanding into 10 more cities with 18-20 more outlets, taking our overall footprint to 120 by the end of 2026. But most of the money will come from our dealers. We are in 40 cities now with 100 outlets.

You were No. 1 till 2011. With the difference being just about 1,000 units now, when do you see you driving back to the top slot if you maintain the current growth level?
Even in 2024 our gap was about 2,500 units only and now that's about 1,000. But frankly, we're not blindly chasing the No 1 slot. We want it to happen organically. We want to do all the right things, and in the process if we become No 1, that's fine, right? We aren't blindly chasing the top slot by offering discounts or something because we want our growth to be organic. We'll grow step by step, and in the process, we become number one, that's natural. But what we want to do is to take the lead in growing the market. I think a few things are required. For example, if EV penetration is higher in the luxury segment, which is about 10% now, there is a possibility, going by the past precedents, that government may increase tax on luxury EVs. So our request to government is that please don't touch the GST.

So what is your outlook on the EV space? Is that the future of BMW here?
We are quite bullish on EVs, and we've already seen it's doing us so well for us the iX1 being the biggest success story for us. The biggest enabler for EVs is the steeply falling battery prices.

MONEY-WISE

CRITICAL ILLNESS COVER IS CRUCIAL

FINANCIAL ADVICE

ASHOK KUMAR
Head of LKW-India.
He can be reached at ceolotus@hotmail.com
(Views expressed here are personal)

I never tire of stressing on how vital Term Insurance Cover is for anyone with even a single financial dependant. It is worth noting that at the turn of the decade viz. prior to the start of the financial year FY 20-21, barely 10% of those with the means, were interested in buying health insurance to cover new age diseases.

But since the advent of the fear instilled by the pandemic, 71 per cent now consider health insurance a necessity. Notably, and almost overnight, 57 per cent of those surveyed a few years ago, claimed to have understood the importance of comprehensive health insurance plans. That this has not translated into an immediate increase in such coverage is both a reflection of respondent inertia till it is too late and perhaps the lack of an even more aggressive awareness program on the part of insurance companies.

This brings me to a very crucial Insurance product, namely Critical Illness Insurance Cover. Most people tend to overlook it believing that since they have Health Insurance (Mediclaim) they are adequately covered. But the fact is, firstly there has to be hospitalization for Mediclaim to kick in, and further, there are often caps and sub-limits that will easily be exceeded in the event of a Critical Illness. Furthermore, escalation in Premium payable in case of Mediclaim is a given, especially post a year like the peak-Covid one where huge payouts were made.

In contrast to this, there are Critical Illness insurance policies that offer the optional benefit of covering several (30 plus usually) Critical Illnesses such as cancer, heart attack and kidney failure for a maximum of 30 years without any change in premium. What also makes some of these product offerings distinctive is that it gives full claim payout on the first diagnosis of any of these covered Critical Illnesses, even without Hospital Bills. This payout amount is crucial as it can also safeguard one's family against the loss of income arising out of the illness, that could put one out of action for a prolonged period of time.

Critical Illness policies come bundled with an equivalent Term Plan and that usually adds an enhanced financial ring around the family of the one with a Critical Illness in the event of non-survival. That the payment of Premium paid under such a policy can be demarcated and qualifies for tax deductions under the Income Tax Act, offers an additional benefit.

Finally, one must remember that if ever diagnosed with a Critical Illness, it can affect one physically, emotionally and financially. By investing in a Critical Illness cover, one can at least take the inevitable financial pain and insecurity out of the equation. This is because, claiming a Critical Illness payout does not prevent one from claiming a Mediclaim reimbursement separately.

To my mind, Critical Illness Insurance cover is a necessity and even more so for those living in urban areas.

MONEY MATTERS

HOW TO KNOW THE TIME IS RIGHT TO INVEST

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

AROUND dinner time, personal finance discussions often lead to the question: Is it the right time to invest? India's equity markets have performed poorly over the last year, as the selloff driven by conflict in West Asia and rising energy prices has unsettled many. Still, some may view the downturn as an opportunity to build long-term wealth.

To determine if the time is right for you, assess your readiness. The central point is that investing at the right time is not just about market conditions or having sufficient funds, but also about being mentally prepared to take advantage of current circumstances.

Your personal situation

Before making an investment, first review your available funds. Most financial advisors recommend always having an emergency fund, typically covering at least six months of expenses. Prioritise keeping this in a high-yield savings account. During crises, inflation risks increase as goods and services face supply disruptions, so it's wise to maintain an extra cushion for a few months.

Another important factor is outstanding loans. If you have high credit card balances or personal loans for consumption, focus on paying those off first. Paying interest rates of 12-15% does not make sense when you can instead free up future cash flows. Saving on interest is a guaranteed return—no one can promise investment returns, but you can always benefit from eliminating high-cost loans. Make it your priority to close all short-term, high-interest debts.

The right time

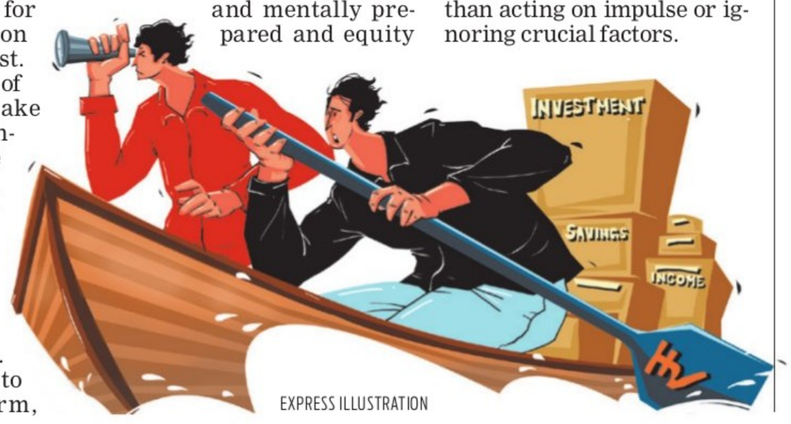
Once you have an emergency fund and have repaid high-interest loans, you are better positioned to invest your future income. Confidence in your earning capacity shapes your willingness to take calculated risks and build long-term wealth. Being financially prepared supports a positive mindset for investing.

After ensuring you are personally ready, consider market valuations. This discussion focuses on equity assets, where a decrease in share prices often signals potential investment opportunities. Recent analysis indicates that the price-earnings multiple for Nifty 50 companies is below its 10-year historical average, making equities more attractive. Thus, the argument is that if you are financially and mentally prepared and equity valuations are low, it may be an opportune time to invest, especially amid temporary factors such as geopolitical tensions.

Follow the money

Despite the attractiveness of Indian equities, foreign investors are withdrawing capital from them. While you may be in a position to get started on your investment journey or seize the opportunity amid the broad-based selloff, you may want to step back and observe the actions of influential investors. Foreign portfolio investors find other equity asset classes more attractive than India's equity market. At the same time, geopolitical tensions lead to higher dollar-denominated interest rates. In such a situation, foreigners' risk appetite tends to decline as they earn high interest rates on US-dollar-denominated Treasury assets.

Even in India, wealthy individuals diversify their assets, often prioritising capital protection by holding substantial amounts in fixed-income instruments. At the same time, they reinvest risk-free capital from interest or dividends when equities are attractively valued. The main argument is that being informed about these investment patterns and consulting with your advisor helps you choose the right time to invest, rather than acting on impulse or ignoring crucial factors.



EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Industrialist Vijaypat Singhania dies at 87

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

VIJAYPAT Singhania, the renowned entrepreneur who transformed Raymond into a leading Indian textile brand and an adventurous aviator, passed away on Saturday at 87.

Born on 4 October 1938, in Kanpur, the late textile magnate belonged to Singhania business family. He assumed leadership of Raymond in 1980 and played a key part in steering the companys' growth.

His son and current Raymond Group chairman and managing director Gautam Singhania wrote on X, "With profound grief and deep sorrow, we inform the passing of Padma Bhushan Dr Vijaypat Kailashpat Singhania. He built his business legacy by reshaping Raymond from a standard textile firm into a diversified conglomerate and a household name with popular branding 'The Complete Man'." His stewardship propelled the company into new sectors like synthetic fabrics, denim, steel, industrial files and cement, all while establishing it as one of India's top apparel brands.

Singhania cremated in Mumbai's Chandanwadi

Vijaypat Singhania was cremated in Mumbai's Chandanwadi at 3 pm on Sunday and is survived by his wife Ashadevi and children Madhupati, Shephali Ruia and Gautam.

In the final phase of his chairmanship, financial pressures mounted on the group due to a recession in the steel and cement sectors. These units were later divested. He then passed the reins to his son Gautam Singhania and served briefly as chairman emeritus.

In his later years, a bitter tussle with son Gautam, stemming from the 2015 transfer of Raymond's controlling stake and disputes over property and treatment, grabbed eyeballs. Outside the boardroom, he was known in the aviation world. In 1988, he set a speed-over-time endurance record for microlight aircraft by flying solo from London Biggin Hill Airport in London to Safdarjung Airport in New Delhi over 23 days. By 2003, he had accumulated 5000 hours of flying experience. He holds the world record for altitude in a hot air balloon.

Singhania is cremated in Mumbai's Chandanwadi at 3 pm on Sunday and is survived by his wife Ashadevi and children Madhupati, Shephali Ruia and Gautam.

RBI restrictions on banks' forex bets to provide rupee temporary respite

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

THE RBI's decision to cap banks' net open rupee positions at $100 million a day could give a temporary relief to bearish sentiments in rupee, but the Indian currency would continue to take medium and long-term directions from other factors such as energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

A forced adjustment to the Net Open Position (NOP) limits could trigger a sharp corrective move in favour of rupee as banks rush to rebalance positions, says Anindya Banerjee, head of commodity and currency research at Kotak Securities. However, he feels any upside is likely to be transient. "We expect the RBI to lean against excessive volatility, stepping in via forward dollar buying, especially given its existing short positioning," he says.

We expect RBI to lean against excessive volatility, stepping in via forward dollar buying, especially given its existing short positioning

Anindya Banerjee, Kotak Securities

Experts believe beyond the immediate technical adjustments, the bigger driver remains intact — energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Until there is clear normalization on that front, elevated crude and gas prices will continue to exert structural pressure on the rupee, they say.

The RBI on Friday directed authorised dealer (AD) banks to limit their net open position in the rupee (NOP-INR) in the onshore deliverable market to $100 million at the end of each business day, in a move aimed at managing exchange rate volatility. The directive requires banks to comply with the revised limits at the earliest, but no later than April 10, 2026.

The RBI said the decision has been taken under provisions that allow it to prescribe limits on open positions involving the rupee depending on prevailing market conditions.

Tudor era ends at Tottenham after just seven matches

Tottenham chose to part ways with Igor Tudor on Sunday, just seven matches into his spell as interim coach of a team that has plunged into a relegation fight in the PL. A club statement read: "We can confirm that it has been mutually agreed for head coach Igor Tudor to leave the club with immediate effect."

ROHIT'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH KKR CONTINUES

Chasing 221, openers add 148 in just 71 balls to help Mumbai get off to winning start

CHANDRA PRABHU @ Chennai

WHEN Mumbai Indians won the toss and opted to bowl first against Kolkata Knight Riders on Sunday, there was a sense of cautious optimism amongst the MI faithful at the Wankhede Stadium. The five-time winners are notorious for having bad starts in the IPL, and this time, that facet of the team has been spoken about more than before.

And it only grew as Ajinkya Rahane and Angrish Raghuvanshi — two Mumbaikars from different generations — take centrestage for Kolkata. First, it was the veteran in Rahane, whose place in the side and choice as captain came under the lens, who stepped up with 40-ball 67. Next came Raghuvanshi, touted as the future star from the city of dreams, who smashed 51 off 21 balls as KKR finished with 220/4 in 20 overs. Just briefly, it seemed like Mumbai were back in a familiar setting where they start the season with a loss thanks to two batting stars from the same city.

Then the arena saw Rohit Sharma, rather possessed. A leaner, meaner version of the 38-year-old took over the Wankhede in the way only he can, as he rushed to 51 in 23 balls. This version of Rohit underwent some significant changes in fitness post IPL 2025, including weight of around 15 kgs. He also took up an intensive fitness regime for three months, focusing on high-intensity endurance drills and working on core strength. And the transformation was evident weeks before he took the field for MI on Sunday.

Ahead of the 2026 T20 World Cup semi-final between India and England at the same venue, Rohit, who was the tournament ambassador, could be seen talking to Brendon McCullum, who quips 'where's the rest of you?'. In the video shared by ICC, Rohit replies instantly with a smile: "All gone."

And it all showed on Sunday once again. Beginning at 12 off eight balls, the veteran rolled back the years with crowd-favourite pull shot off Vaibhav Arora and a few exquisite shots off the lanky Blessing Muzarabani. Both the bowlers brought the pace on, and Rohit did nothing but guide it high in the Mumbai night sky. He continued to pile miseries on the KKR bowlers, just like he did over the years in the IPL. Before Saturday's match, Rohit had scored 1083 runs against this opposition, one-seventh of the total runs he has made in this tournament.

After the early onslaught, spinner Varun Chakravarthy was given the ball in the fifth over. Before this match, Rohit striked at less than 100 against Chakravarthy. For the mystery spinner from Tamil Nadu, a wicket of Rohit would help his confidence by leaps and bounds, after a less-than-satisfactory T20 World Cup. But he came nowhere close to it. Rohit welcomed him with a beautiful shot over the covers for four. And soon came the fifty, his fastest in the IPL. His knock was also part of a record opening stand for Mumbai Indians with Ryan Rickelton (147) at this ground.

Though he eventually fell for 78 off 38, by the time Rohit took the long walk back to the dressing room, he had done his job. But that was not all he did. The 38-year-old, once again, showed the world that he is not going anywhere till the 2027 ODI World Cup.

Rohit Sharma scored a 38-ball 78 to give MI a flying start against KKR, at Wankhede on Sunday | BCCI

BRIEF SCORES

KKR 220/4 in 20 ovs (Rahane 67, Raghuvanshi 51, Rinku 33 n.o; Thakur 3/39) **lost to** MI 224/4 in 19.1 ovs (Rickelton 81, Sharma 78).

1083 No. of runs Rohit had scored vs KKR before Sunday's match. It is one-seventh of his total runs he has scored in IPL

FRESH START FOR RAJASTHAN & CHENNAI

RAVINDRA JADEJA AND SANJU SAMSON WILL START NEW CHAPTERS IN THEIR FABLED IPL CAREERS AGAINST THEIR FORMER TEAMS, AS RR TAKE ON CSK IN GUWAHATI ON MONDAY. A LOOK...

Ruturaj-Samson in spotlight

With MS Dhoni not travelling to Guwahati due to a calf injury, eyes will be on captain Ruturaj Gaikwad & Sanju Samson, who are set to open. They will form the leadership core in Dhoni's absence. Sanju arrives in prime form, playing big knocks in India's successful defence of the T20 WC title.

The Riyan era

Samson's departure signals the end of an era and the beginning of another under Riyan Parag. Jadeja will bring experience and balance but his waning finishing skills could be a concern for the Royals. Bowling is another concern. Despite an overhaul, question marks remain over the consistency of pacer Jofra Archer.

Brevis to miss clash with side strain

Dewald Brevis, one of the key stars of CSK from 2025, is ruled out with side strain, head coach Stephen Fleming confirmed. The team management will hope that the South African becomes available by the time they play their first game in Chennai on Friday.

RR VS CSK LIVE FROM 7.30PM ON STAR SPORTS & JIOHOTSTAR @ GUWAHATI

'Mature' Vishnu aims to make a mark for Punjab

GOMESH S @ Chennai

WHEN Vishnu Vinod entered the 2025-26 white-ball season for Kerala in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, he had done everything he could to make an impact for the team.

The 32-year-old was a part of Punjab Kings team that reached the IPL 2025 final but did not get a game. He spent long hours every day training during off-season before coming into Kerala Cricket League and lighting up the stage for Kollam Sailors whilst batting in the middle-order. Vishnu smashed 301 runs at 200.67 strike rate — highest for any batter with more than 250 runs — in 11 innings, helping Kollam reach the final where they fell short against Kochi Blue Tigers. Then came the century against Oman in the three T20s Kerala played against the international side. And, when found himself out of the Ranji squad for the first set of games, Vishnu went to Chennai where he turned up for Southern Railway Institute in the 50-over TNCA II Division league.

All the time he had spent on the field, smashing sixes and scoring runs for different teams had given him confidence to succeed when SMAT began. It seemed like he was set for a big season with Kerala. However, in sport, success is seldom assured. When he started the season with a run-a-ball seven where Kerala lost to Railways while chasing 150, Vishnu found himself in tough place. Doubts crept in once again. That is when skipper Sanju Samson, who had seen Vishnu up close over the years, and head coach Amay Khurasiya lent a shoulder to have a chat with his teammate. "When I did not do well in the first game, Sanju came and spoke with me. He told me that even if I did not score runs, he will back me to play every time. That gave me a lot of confidence," the PBKS batter recalls in a chat with this daily.

Runs started coming in the games that followed but a hamstring strain meant he could play only five games. Come the Vijay Hazare Trophy, Vishnu was keen to make up for it. He smashed 422 runs, averaging 105.5 and striking at 145.51 in the middle-order. It led to his comeback into the Ranji set up where Vishnu captained Kerala in their only win of the tournament against Goa. Vishnu, in what was a roller-coaster of a season, kept his head down and focussed on his cricket and rewards came eventually.

Vishnu has been a part of Kerala senior team for more than a decade and been around in the IPL since 2017 (Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Delhi Capitals, Mumbai Indians and PBKS). He has always been regarded as one of the talents to watch out for from the Southern state. For some reason or other, consistent performances were not coming. And neither did the chances in the big leagues. Vishnu is very much aware of it and it has helped him evolve over the years both as a batter and a person. "I have been in the team for a long time. This is my seventh season in the IPL but I have played only six games. I came in as an opener in 2017 before moving to middle-order in 2021. Now, I bat in the middle-order in all formats. There is a big difference between the opening and the middle-order. We can't hit the ball like we used to in the powerplay and that has helped me gain the ability to play the situation and finish games for the team. When we play a lot of matches, we get a lot of experience. I have played 150 matches for the domestic team. I have that maturity. That is the difference," Vishnu reflects.

Kerala coach Khurasiya attests to the change in mindset. "I think this year you will see a different Vishnu in T20s," the former India cricketer says with confidence. "He has become mentally more stronger and he is more organised in terms of his focus and approach now as a player. We had just basic conversations, letting him know where he belongs, what are his strengths and what he can achieve with that. He is a very good finisher where his strike rate goes from 150-160 to 200. I think he will do a great job whatever opportunity he gets," he adds.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Asian Boxing C'ship draw: Nikhat could face Oly champ in semis

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

THE devil lies in the details. India women's head coach Santiago Nieva, along with the rest of the coaching staff, are engrossed in video analysis late on Sunday. It's a common but much-needed practice for coaches at the elite level. And this was just after the conclusion of the official draw of the Asian Championships, which is set to be held from March 30 to April 10 at the ASA Arena in Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia).

The draw, as is expected at this level, is a tricky one and Nieva and the rest of the support staff are looking to get useful datas for the boxers to exploit in the coming days. The team, comprising a few seasoned stars and rising talents, will be bandying punches in the first major event of the year. The continental meet holds plenty of weight as it could decide the participants' future. Reach the finals and you're set for far meatier events (as per selection policy) in the months to come. Miss out and it could be back to the drawing board.

Nikhat Zareen

Lovlina Borgohain

With rivals from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan also taking part, it goes without saying the boxers will have to put their best foot forward in order to challenge for podium finish. Lovlina Borgohain, one of the seasoned boxers in the team, will be looking to regain her mojo after a subdued 2025. However, the Olympic medallist, who will begin her campaign from the semifinal stage (75kg), could potentially meet rising talent Aziza Zokirova of Uzbekistan, a silver medallist from the 2024 edition. It's no surprise that Nieva & Co were digging into the details and looking to gain an edge.

Reigning world champs Minakshi Hooda (48kg), Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen are No 1 seeds in their respective weight categories and they'll be hoping to live up to their billing. Nikhat's weight category (51kg) is one that has been competitive for a long time and it's no different this time around. The World No 3 could run into Olympic champ Wu Yu of China in the last-four stage. "In the women's section, only the strong countries are participating. There are many bouts with Kazakhstan early on but we will do well," Nieva tells this daily. Meanwhile, men boxers will have it tougher as the participation is more in most categories. Moreover, most also lack experience at the elite level.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Antonelli triumphs to become youngest F1 c'ship leader

AGENCIES @ Suzuka

MERCEDES' Kimi Antonelli won the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday for his second straight victory, as the 19-year-old Italian became the youngest driver in Formula One history to lead the world championship standings.

Antonelli took advantage of a mid-race safety car to leapfrog into the lead after a dreadful start from pole position and led home McLaren's Oscar Piastri by 13.722sec with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc a further 1.548sec back in third. He whooped with delight as he crossed the line at Suzuka, telling his team "the pace was unbelievable today".

He moved up to 72 points and leads the championship by nine points after three races, building on the first grand prix win of his career two weeks ago in China. His Mercedes teammate George Russell finished fourth to drop to second in the standings on 63. Leclerc is third on 49. Russell battled Piastri for the lead over the first half of the race but pitted just before the safety car which dropped him out of contention.

RESULTS (TOP 6): 1. Antonelli (ITA/Mercedes) 307km in 1hr 28min 3.403sec, 2. Piastri (AUS/McLaren) +13.722s, 3. Leclerc (MON/Ferrari) + 15.270, 4. George Russell (GBR/Mercedes) +15.754, 5. Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren) + 23.479, 6. Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Ferrari) +25.037

Pragg beats Giri on opening night of Candidates

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Chennai

R PRAGGNANANDHAA, in the words of Viswanathan Anand, produced a 'masterpiece', to take down Anish Giri in the first round of the Candidates at Cyprus on Sunday. Playing with the white pieces, the Indian ace, featuring in his second Candidates, pushed right out of the gates with the lesser-spotted 1. e4, 2 Nc3 opening. The Dutch GM responded with 1. c5, 2 d.6 and the gauntlet was immediately laid out.

Both of them got out of the opening without giving the other an inch but there was a shift of momentum towards the Indian in the middle game. The evaluation bar was level after 29 moves but Giri had spent a lot of the opening two hours in the tank as Praggnanandhaa's opening had caught him by surprise.

Even if Giri got out unscathed, he was chasing the game for a long time because of the lack of time in his clock. And he was forced to play a number of precise moves to even stand still. And the 20-year-old pressed home the advantage in the endgame with a decisive move to capture Giri's knight on the 42nd move. The other option — to move his outside pawn to h7 — was tempting but it would have been a big error. A few moves later, Giri resigned to hand his younger opponent a big win on the opening night of the tournament. You cannot win the Candidates with a good start but you can very easily lose it with a couple of losses. That's why it was important for the Indian to seize home the initiative. He will face Wei Yi with the black pieces on Monday.

Results (Rd 1): Open: Andrey Esipenko lost to Javokhir Sindarov, Wei Yi drew with Matthias Bluebaum, R Praggnanandhaa beat Anish Giri, Hikaru Nakamura lost to Fabiano Caruana. **Women:** Divya Deshmukh drew Anna Muzychuk, Bibisara Assaubayeva drew with Vaishali, Kateryna Lagno drew with Aleksandra Goryachkina, Tan Zhongyi drew with Zhu Jiner.

EXPRESS READ

Mary Kom considers move into pro boxing

NEW DELHI: Olympic bronze medallist and six-time world champion Indian boxer MC Mary Kom on Sunday said she is considering a move into professional boxing. "Although I reached a stage where age restrictions prevented me from competing further in amateur boxing for the country, a new opportunity has surfaced in Professional Boxing," the 43-year-old said on the sidelines of an event in New Delhi.

Indians shine in World Wushu Championship

TIANJIN (CHINA): Indian athletes secured two bronze medals while four others moved to the finals in different categories at the 10th World Wushu Championship here on Sunday. Anu and Goutam Mankas lost their respective semifinals to finish with a bronze each. Meanwhile, Upendro Thougam, Pama Heiba Singh, Yuvraj and Victor were the four Indian players to enter finals.

KEY DECISIONS

AIFF discusses details of ISL bids, clubs to be presented bid structure

CHANDRA PRABHU @ Chennai

BIDDERS looking to own and manage the commercial rights of the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) men's tournaments will present their bids to Indian Super League (ISL) clubs in midweek, the Executive Committee of the AIFF agreed on Sunday.

This comes a day after the ISL clubs wrote to the AIFF seeking for more time to evaluate the bids. Two companies — UK-based Genius sports and Dream Sports-owned FanCode — placed their bids recently to manage and promote the Indian Super League and the Federation Cup. Genius sports' bid has an annual spending amount of around ₹63 crores with a five per cent increase each year for twenty years. FanCode, who are broadcasting the ongoing 2025/26 ISL season, have their annual spending at ₹36 crore over a 20-year cycle. The bid, which covers media rights, sponsorships data and other commercial assets, were discussed in detail in committee's meeting.

"The clubs will look at the structure of their bids and how they will commercially produce the league. They would want to know how viable their bids are. This decision (on the commercial partner) will be taken together," AIFF's deputy secretary general, M Satyanarayan, told this daily. In addition to clubs meeting the bidders, the bids will be evaluated by one of the big four consultant companies. "To bring accountability and a little more clarity (on the bids), we will give it to KPMG," he added. After this, the bidders and the AIFF may negotiate, based on feedback given by the clubs. This process, Satyanarayan said, may take almost a month.

Adoption of new Act

The committee also discussed the implementation of the proposed National Sports Governance Act.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

HOW THE BIDS LOOK FOR LONG-TERM RIGHTS FOR MEN'S TOURNAMENTS (ISL & FED CUP)

Company	1st year spending (₹ in crs)	Annual increment	Total bid amt (₹in crs)
Genius Sports	63	5 per cent	₹2129
FanCode	36	5 per cent	₹1,190

20 Under the proposed model of revenue sharing, AIFF will receive 20 per cent of committed spening amount from bidder annually.

Unprecedented Connectivity through Road, Air and Water Transformation

Nine Years of Infrastructure Excellence under the Leadership of CM Yogi Adityanath

Over the past nine years, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as India's fastest-growing connectivity hub, driven by visionary infrastructure planning and large-scale execution. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has transformed the state into an **Expressway Pradesh**, strengthening highways, logistics corridors, waterways, and modern road infrastructure. These initiatives have reduced logistics costs, accelerated industrial growth & investment, improved regional accessibility, and positioned the state as a national economic powerhouse.

Expressway Pradesh
A New Benchmark in Connectivity

Uttar Pradesh progressing from 2 expressways in 2017 to 22 expressways (7 operational, 5 under construction, 10 proposed)

Nearly 55% of India's expressway network passes through Uttar Pradesh, the highest in the country

5,300 hectares have been identified for industrial development at 27 locations in 26 districts around the expressway

Currently, UPIDA is successfully operating

Yamuna Expressway
Noida to Agra (165 km)

Agra-Lucknow Expressway
Delhi to Agra (302 km)

Purvanchal Expressway
Lucknow to Gazipur (341 km)

Bundelkhand Expressway
Chitrakoot to Agra-Lucknow Expressway (296 km)

Delhi-Meerut Expressway
Delhi to Meerut (82 km)

Gorakhpur Link Expressway
Gorakhpur to Purvanchal Expressway (82 km)

Industrial & Economic Connectivity Boost

- Uttar Pradesh emerging as a key state connecting the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.
- Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority (BIDA) driving development after decades, with 56,662 acres planned for integrated industrial expansion.
- Integrated Manufacturing Clusters proposed in Prayagraj and Agra under Industrial Corridor development.

Air Connectivity

- **Expanding Airport Network:** Currently, 17 airports are operational in the state, including 5 international airports and 8 airports are under process.
- **Upcoming Aviation Boost:** Moving towards developing Jewar Airport as a maintenance and operations hub, alongside an Aviation Innovation and Research Center.
- **Strategic Aviation Growth:** National and international air services are available to over 80 destinations.
- **MRO Infrastructure Development:** Dedicated Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) facilities are being developed near airports to support aviation services and boost industrial growth.
- **Regional Connectivity Strengthened:** Under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN), several Uttar Pradesh cities- Aligarh, Azamgarh, Moradabad, Shravasti and Chitrakoot, are having their airports upgraded and integrated into the national network.
- **Seamless Air Access:** Improved infrastructure is ensuring better connectivity between smaller cities and major urban and economic centers.
- **Passenger Growth Momentum:** Air passenger traffic has surged significantly-from 59.97 lakh (2016–17) to 14.23 crore (2024–25), reflecting enhanced connectivity and demand.
- **Integrated Aviation Ecosystem:** Development of airports alongside logistics and service infrastructure is accelerating trade, tourism, and regional development.

Road, Rail & Freight Corridors: Logistics Backbone

- Uttar Pradesh has the largest road network in India-over 16,000 km.
- 90 National Highways pass through the state, strengthening national connectivity.
- Significant expansion of national highway infrastructure.
- Uttar Pradesh serves as the nation's premier logistics hub, anchored by the strategic intersection of the Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) at Dadri.
- UPIDA has proposed the construction of the Chitrakoot Link Expressway (15.17 km), Lucknow Link Expressway (to connect the Agra-Lucknow Expressway with the Purvanchal Expressway, 50 km), Farrukhabad Link Expressway (from the Agra-Lucknow Expressway to the Ganga Expressway, 91 km), Jewar-Ganga Link Expressway (via Bulandshahr, 74 km), Jhansi Link Expressway (118 km), Meerut-Haridwar Link Expressway (136 km), Noida-Jewar Link Expressway (50 km), Vindhya Expressway (320 km), and the Vindhya-Purvanchal Expressway Link Spur (100 km).

Water Ways: Low Cost, High Efficiency Transport

- Uttar Pradesh is strengthening its inland logistics, fostering economic growth, and developing tourism. With 11 of India's 111 declared National Waterways passing through Uttar Pradesh.
- 425-kilometer stretch of National Waterway-1 (Varanasi-Haldia) is located in Uttar Pradesh, which is being extended up to Ayodhya.
- Formation of Uttar Pradesh Inland Waterways Authority to accelerate water transport development.
- Water-based logistics reducing transport costs while enhancing cargo movement efficiency.

Logistics Cost Reduction & Investment Growth

- Uttar Pradesh secured the fourth position in the 'Export Preparedness Index 2024,' released by the Government of India in January 2026, whereas in 2022, the state stood at the seventh position.
- Among landlocked states, Uttar Pradesh secured 1st position due to improved logistics infrastructure.
- **Reduction in logistics cost leading to:**
  - ➢ Faster transportation time
  - ➢ Higher industrial competitiveness
  - ➢ Increased investor confidence.
- The country's first multi-modal terminal has been established in Varanasi, terminals and freight villages are being developed in Ramnagar, Chandauli, Mirzapur, and Ghazipur.
- India's first Freight Village developed across 100 acres in Varanasi.

Transforming Road Infrastructure

- **Connecting Tehsil Headquarters via 2-Lane Roads:** Since 2017, sanctions have been issued for works covering a total road length of 291 km across 38 Tehsil headquarters, at a cost of ₹445 crore.
- **Connecting Block Headquarters via 2-Lane Roads:** Since 2017, sanctions have been issued for works covering a total road length of 1,438 km across 189 Tehsil headquarters, at a cost of ₹2,505 crore
- **Expansion of State Highways:** 70 new State Highways were declared by reclassifying routes spanning 5,604 km.
  - ➢ During the tenure spanning from 2017 to the present, road widening and strengthening works covering a total length of approximately 27,951 km have been carried out under various schemes.
  - ➢ Development of a Green Corridor in the capital city of Lucknow at a cost of ₹7,000 crore to facilitate smooth traffic flow.
- **Construction of Rural Roads:** During the tenure of the current government so far, rural roads spanning a length of approximately 35,433 km have been constructed.
- **Construction of Bridges and Railway Overbridges:** Since the year 2017-18, 294 major bridges-including approach roads-have been completed.
  - ➢ At present, construction work of 116 long bridges is in progress at various important places.
  - ➢ Completion of 141 Railway Overbridges and 16 Flyovers, including approach roads.

Proposed Expressway Network

Chitrakoot Link Expressway (15.17 km) – Lucknow Link Expressway (Agra-Lucknow with Purvanchal Expressway) (50 km) – Farrukhabad Link Expressway (Agra-Lucknow with Ganga Expressway) (91 km) – Jewar-Ganga Link Expressway (74 km) – Jhansi Link Expressway (118 km) – Meerut-Haridwar Link Expressway (136 km) – Noida-Jewar Link Expressway (50 km) – Vindhya Expressway (320 km) – Vindhya-Purvanchal Link Expressway (100 km) – Ganga Expressway Meerut To Prayagraj (594 KM)

- ➢ Implementation of **Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission** to develop industrial corridors along expressways.
- ➢ Work on the new construction, widening, and strengthening of roads is being carried out at an average rate of 19 km per day.

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DAY'S DIARY

Reflight Revolution

On this day, in 2017, SpaceX revolutionised spaceflight by successfully conducting the world's first reflight of an orbital class rocket

THE PROJECT PROTAGONIST

Falcon 9 is a reusable, two-stage rocket, designed and manufactured by SpaceX for the reliable and safe transport of people and payloads into Earth's orbit and beyond

ELON'S AGENDA

To reduce the cost of spaceflight and increase the company's tempo of launches, Elon Musk has long wanted to develop reusable rockets

PRESENT-DAY

The reused Falcon 9 boosters are routinely flown multiple times, with some boosters completing over a dozen missions

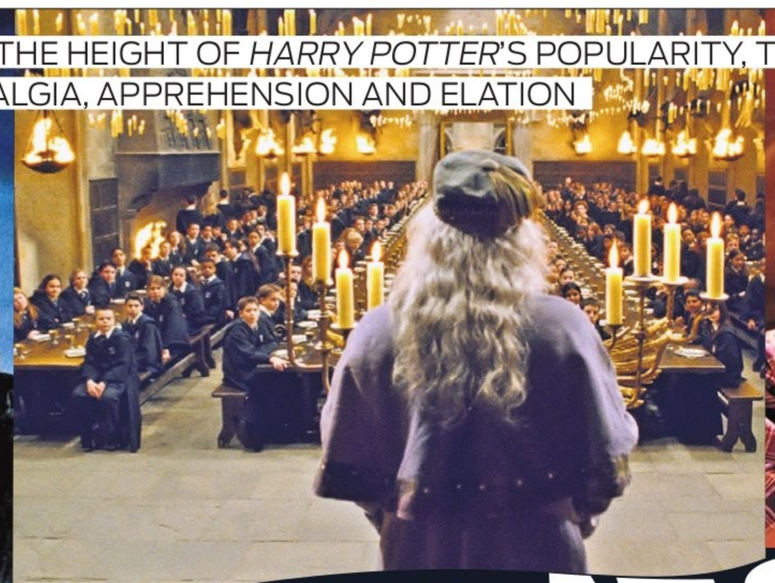
Kick-start your week with these events!

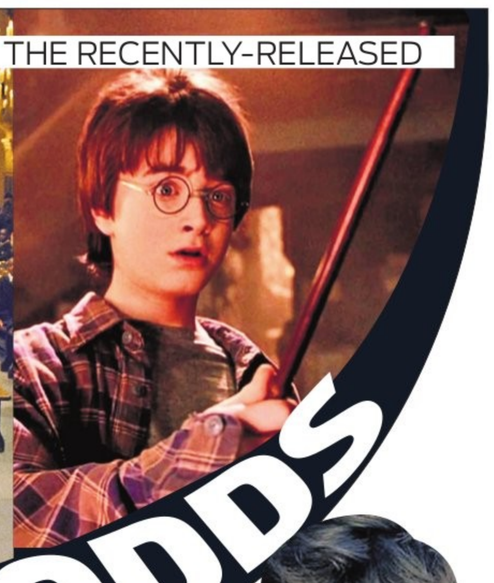
PG 2

FOR GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS WHO GREW UP AT THE HEIGHT OF *HARRY POTTER*'S POPULARITY, THE RECENTLY-RELEASED TEASER OF THE NEW SERIES HAS EVOKED NOSTALGIA, APPREHENSION AND ELATION

Dominic McLaughlin will star as the young wizard Harry Potter

WIZARDS AT ODDS





When I saw the trailer, I understood what everyone means when they say that the films don't cover everything – Harry's backstory especially looks much more fleshed out — Divyansh Bardia, student

MAHIMA NAGARAJU

ALMOST every kid growing up in the 2000s and 2010s, bored of the boredom of classes and home hoped that an owl would bring them a Hogwarts letter and take them away to a much more magical world – where school meant learning how to make feathers float instead of long division and flying on broomsticks, not running laps around the PE grounds. When the teaser for the new *Harry Potter* series dropped recently, for a few of those kids, now adults, it felt like they would get a chance to relieve that wide-eyed wonder once more.

For Gen Z like college student Divyansh Bardia, who discovered the movies while trying to cope with the pandemic, the show is especially meaningful. He explains, "During the lockdown, especially with board exams, life felt serious. Watching *Harry Potter* helped me escape into a different world. It makes you want to watch it again and again – rewatching is a Christmas tradition." He shares eagerly, "When I saw the trailer, I understood what everyone means when they say that the films don't cover everything – Harry's backstory especially looks much more fleshed out."

But not everyone is optimistic, including Prerana Chowdhury, a medical student, who points out the grittier, darker look of the trailer compared to the more magical mood of the first film directed by Chris Columbus. "I loved the warmth of the films – the great hall with candles floating overhead, the brick walls, there were lots of textures and warm colours with the costumes too. I hate how cold the trailer looks in the blue and white tones."

Deciding to casting a black actor, Paapa Essiedu, as the morally grey Severus Snape too has received immense online backlash since the announcement first hit the news, as commentators pointed out that Harry immediately mistrusting the only black professor would carry a different connotation in the story than in the books or films. Columbus too has criticised the show as 'more of the same' speaking to a major media outlet and pointing out that Hagrid's costume is the 'exact same' his team designed for the movies.

The fall of an icon

Potter fans idolised JK Rowling but as they entered adulthood and the author increasingly made the news for supporting 'anti-transgender' activists and legislation in the UK, several cast members, including the 'golden trio' of Emma Watson, Rupert Grint and Daniel Radcliffe, have condemned her actions.

Fans, too, have had to grapple with their relationship with the show and how much they want to engage with the creations of a writer whose views they oppose. Some, like college student Divyanshi Krishna believe that it's possible to 'separate the art from the artist,' saying, "Rowling's stances don't really affect my decision to watch it. For me, *Harry Potter* is about comfort and escapism." While Pavithra Muthalagan, a graphic designer who became a fan in the 2000s as the books released, strongly disagrees, believing in boycotting. She says, "This is not just about what she says online, but about openly using her money for campaigns against trans rights. She has the platform to do damage." However, Muthalagan still reads and loves fanfiction (stories written by fans with the universe's characters and posted for free on the internet), which she finds, answers some choices in the original books which she started to question as she grew older and read more critically. "I find a lot of fanfiction tries to fix problems and plotholes: why were the marauders bullies and why were we celebrating that?" she asks.

Others, however, are conflicted but trying to find middle ground, as product specialist Akhilesh S, confesses, "The books really spoke to me a lot, especially with how frustrating it could be when you're overlooked as a kid. I also loved that it had characters like Lupin who would help Harry handle his emotions in a way which I didn't see others in my life do." He adds, "I've come to still appreciate it for the impact it had on me. I don't think I'll watch it. If I do, I'll watch it unofficially."

(With inputs from C Jayanth)

CITY READ

Runners unite to support spinal cord injury research

The 14th edition of the Wings for Life World Run is set to take place on May 10, starting at 4.30pm GMT. In this unique format, there is no fixed finish line but a catcher car gradually increases its speed, chasing runners from behind. Once the car overtakes a participant, their race comes to an end. In Bengaluru, runners can gather at the IISc campus to be part of it with a ₹1,3000 registration fee – entirely going to the Wings for Life foundation which supports spinal cord injury research. In 2025, a record-breaking 310,719 participants from 191 nationalities took part simultaneously across 170 countries. A total of 324 research projects and clinical trials have been supported by the Wings for Life foundation since its founding in 2004. Register at wingsforlifeworldrun.com.

Energy healing camps to be held on World Health Day

Mega MCKS Pranic Healing is set to host healing camps to mark World Health Day, across India, scheduled for April 4 and 5. The camps invite people to experience no-touch, no-drug energy therapy that uses prana, or life force, to support physical and mental well-being. Open to all, the initiative aims to bring simple healing practices to a wider community. For more information, contact 99861 58608.

JAP-ZAP

PG 3

MUSICAL EUPHORIA

Known for hits like *Pallikoodam - The Farewell Song*, *Kesariya Rangu* and *Samajavaragamana*, singer Sanjith Hegde delivers a soulful performance that had audiences singing along throughout at +91 Live festival

SRUTHI HEMACHANDRAN

With celebrities bringing fringes back to the red carpet, namma ooru creatives decode the obsession over movement and expressive style

Made TO Move

THE fringe is back and how! Once tied to bohemian dressing or vintage reference, fringes have now taken on a modern edge. Recently, *Levitating* star Dua Lipa turned heads at the Oscars After-Party in a Schiaparelli gown that shimmered with a golden fringe. The detailing added drama to a classic velvet silhouette, bringing energy to her every step. Oscar-winning actor Cate Blanchett also stole the spotlight at the 'A Night in Berlin' gala, with fashion insiders going gaga over her fringe-forward attire, which featured detailing that felt artsy and museum-worthy.

Adding to the momentum, fashion icons like Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Deepika Padukone, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan were also spotted embracing fringe at luxury events, further cementing the 'I'm the drama' detailing as a go-to for high-impact, movement-led dressing. The fringe has also made its way into daily dressing. Instead of full statement pieces, it's showing up in smaller doses, for instance on bags, hems, sleeves and trims that add edge to the outfit without overwhelming the look.

Aiswarya Sreenivasan, Miss Universe Kerala 2025, approaches fringes with movement in mind. She favours fringed jackets, skirts or subtle trims that bring energy to her fits. "I love anything that moves with me. A fringe jacket or skirt can completely change the vibe of a simple outfit. I usually pick one statement piece and keep the rest basic. That way, the movement stands out naturally without feeling over the top," she says.

Stylist Anu Mehta adds a note of balance, as she shares, "The appeal of a fringe lies in its statement. But a statement can absolutely be everyday one, let it lead and let everything else breathe." Mehta also stresses placement – jackets or hemlines suit pear shapes, while sleeves and hems flatter apple frames. A diagonal or layered fringe can also create curves on athletic bodies. Accessories or hemline fringe are universally flattering and can elevate any outfit subtly.

A fringe is also about experimenting with textures and movements, and not just following trends. "Flowy fabrics, tassels or long earrings add life to any outfit. It's all about what moves with you and reflects your personality," explains Sreenivasan. Designer Anshu Arora says it's best to choose pieces that truly resonate. "A fringe can feel over the top if you rush to buy the first thing you see. Take your time, choose pieces that you will wear for years and make them part of your wardrobe," she advises, recommending subtle choices like a fringed bag, scarf or shoes that nod to an era but also remain modern.

The city's climate makes layering versatile. Cool mornings and evenings allow for lightweight leather or suede jackets, tees and jeans that move with the body, while warmer days call for subtler accessorising that features fringed bags or scarves. "Lighter options work when the city warms up. It's about matching the fringe to the weather without losing style," says Mehta, while Sreenivasan adds, "Even for office or casual settings, small fringe details keep the look playful."

With the right pieces and a little confidence, a fringe is a way to let your outfit move with you, adding personality. As Arora puts it, "Only buy them if you feel like they're something you will wear for a long time to come. If you feel you can mix it and style it in various ways to make it your own, that's when fringe becomes timeless."

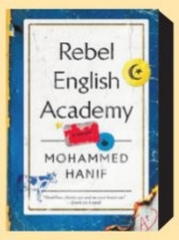
Ananya Panday flaunts her fringes

Stylist Anu Mehta in Anamika Khanna French trousers
Malaika Arora in a red strappy ankle-length fringe dress
Dua Lipa in a Schiaparelli gown

HAIR EDITION

Fringes aren't just for clothes; they can completely change your look, but only if they suit your hair and lifestyle. Hairstylist Danny finds it the quickest way to refresh ones style without losing length. "It's not just face shape. I consider three things: face structure for balance, hair texture and density and lifestyle. I always ask 'Will you style this every day?' A fringe needs commitment," he explains. Common mistakes are impulsive cuts, ignoring hair texture, skipping trims or expecting it to style itself. When it comes to maintenance, one has to blow dry after washing, use a round brush or straightener for natural movement, apply lightweight serum and trim every four weeks. Matching the fringe to your personality ensures it looks effortless and flattering all day. And if cutting is not an option, artificial bangs can be fun, temporary way to experiment.

BOOK NOOK

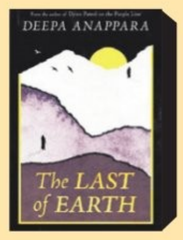


Rebel English Academy
By Mohammed Hanif

In a time of political unrest, a small English tuition centre becomes an unlikely refuge for those caught in the storm. Through Sabih's story, the novel explores faith, authority, love and dissent in modern Pakistan.

Hot Butter Cuttlefish
By Ashok Ferrey

After a failed marriage, Malik retreats to a quiet Sri Lankan village seeking solitude. But when the pandemic arrives, romance, politics and superstition collide in unexpected ways.



The Last Day of Earth
By Deepa Anappara

Nine-year-old Dayachand and his friends search for their missing classmate in a south Indian slum. Their journey reveals the harsh realities of poverty, injustice and survival in contemporary India.

This Is Where the Serpent Lives
By Daniyal Mueenuddin

Spanning cities and feudal estates, the novel traces interconnected lives shaped by power, money and love. It offers a rich portrait of ambition, loyalty and moral choices in contemporary Pakistan.

HUE KNOW WHAT...

Curators Divya Murali and Henna Bajaj engage in conversation about the artworks on display at the exhibition of 'A Measure of Many' at Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavanagudi | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

QUICKFIX

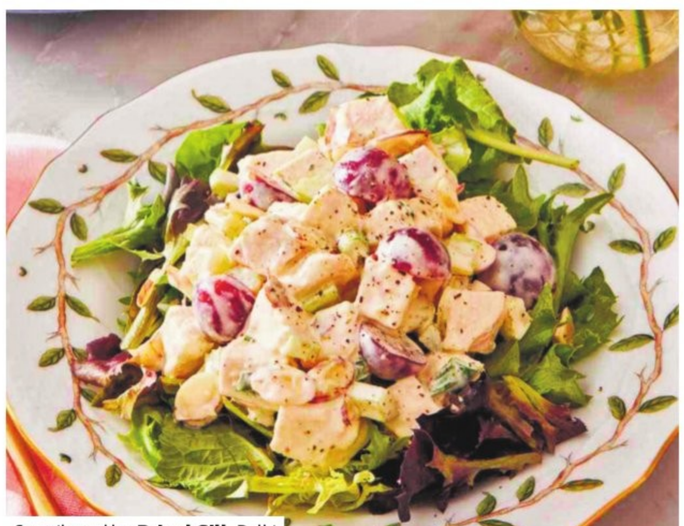
EASY CHICKEN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- **Chicken:** 5 chicken breasts
- **Celery:** 1 stalk
- **Chicken Broth:** 2 tbsp
- **Black Pepper:** 1 tsp
- **Mayonnaise:** 2 tbsp
- **Red Onion:** 1
- **Dijon Mustard:** 1 tsp

METHOD

- Arrange the chicken breasts from one whole roasted chicken.
- Chop celery and onions for some crunch and add any other additional veggies of your choice.
- Add a splash of the broth over the veggies. Mix in some mustard and pepper. Finally, add the mayonnaise and mix all the ingredients together.
- Add salt to taste.



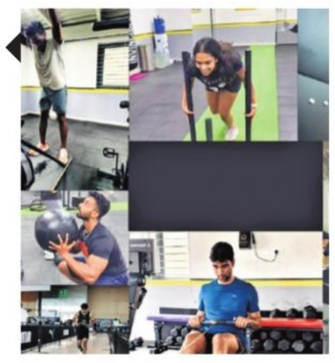
Contributed by **Priyal Gill,** Delhi

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Endurance in Action

Train with this HYROX simulation session and build strength, stamina and endurance through guided workout rounds. Learn key movements like running, SkiErg, sled push, sled pull, burpees, rowing and more. Follow a structured session with technique practice, simulation and recovery.

WHEN: March 30, 8.45am
WHERE: The Fit Ground, Koramangala
DETAILS: district.in



Creative Colours

Engage in this fluid art workshop through paint pouring and simple techniques like the dirty pour and flip cup. Watch colours flow, mix and create patterns on canvas. Create your own artwork and take it home.

WHEN: March 30, 2pm
WHERE: Hobby Ghar, Seshadripuram
CALL: 95355 55644

Beats All Night

Start your week with energy and good vibes by diving into Mashup Monday with DJs Harsh and Veejay, spinning non-stop mixes across genres. Enjoy music and dance on the floor. Ladies can enjoy complimentary drinks during the night. Book your spot and be part of the night.

WHEN: March 30, 8pm
WHERE: NoLimmits Lounge and Club, Brigade Road
CALL: 90089 79977

Flavours of Spring

Celebrate spring with this five-course dining experience by Chef Rohit Ghai, crafted with seasonal ingredients and classic flavours. Enjoy a curated menu that combines taste, tradition, and creativity in every course, available in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. Reserve your table and join in this celebration.

WHEN: March 30, 12.30pm
WHERE: Zarqash, The Ritz-Carlton, Residency Road **CALL:** 90058 77138

Hop, Sip, Repeat

Explore Bengaluru nightlife with a local guide who shares stories and insights from pub crawls across Europe and India. Walk through popular lanes, meet new people from across the world and enjoy drinks, games and group moments. Visit multiple pubs and end with music and dance.

WHEN: March 30, 7pm
WHERE: Church Street
DETAILS: district.in

Comedy Chaos

Expect rib-tickling comedy at this show performed in Hindi and English, promising fresh jokes, relatable humour and fun moments. Open to audiences above 18 years.

WHEN: March 30, 8.30pm
WHERE: Klayworkz Barista, JP Nagar
CALL: 70191 15511

Sonic Reset

Immerse yourself in this sound healing session and experience calming vibrations through healing instruments and guided relaxation. Let the sounds help you release stress, relax your mind and reconnect with yourself. No prior experience needed.

WHEN: March 30, 9am
WHERE: House of Moments, HSR Layout
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

DR VIVEK ARORA

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Crown Vet, Delhi.

What organs are usually under stress for a middle-aged female dog, and what checkups are essential at this stage?

In dogs entering their senior years (eight plus years), the organs most commonly affected are the kidneys, liver, heart, joints, endocrine glands (thyroid and adrenal) and teeth/gums. In neutered female dogs, weight gain, urinary concerns and hormonal imbalances may also appear with age. Routine veterinary screening should include a thorough physical examination, blood tests (CBC and biochemistry) to evaluate kidney and liver health, urine analysis, blood pressure check and dental assessment. Screening for age-related conditions such as Chronic Kidney Disease, Hypothyroidism, Cushing's Disease, and Osteoarthritis is recommended. When possible, abdominal ultrasound, chest X-rays, and regular weight monitoring help detect problems early and support healthy ageing.

ASK AN XPERT

FITBIT

CAN FASTING IMPROVE GUT HEALTH NATURALLY?

Gut health is getting a lot of attention and for good reason. Your gut controls digestion, immunity and even your mood. One question that often comes up is whether fasting can improve gut health. The answer is yes. When done correctly, fasting can support your gut in a natural way.

WHAT FASTING DOES TO YOUR GUT:

- Fasting means taking a break from eating for a set period. This gives your digestive system time to rest. Instead of constantly breaking down food, your gut focuses on repair and recovery.
- During this time, the gut lining gets a chance to heal. Inflammation may reduce, and digestion can improve. This reset helps the system function better over time.

IMPACT ON GUT BACTERIA:

- Your gut has good and bad bacteria. What you eat affects this balance. Diets high in sugar and processed food feed harmful bacteria.
- Fasting changes this environment. It supports the growth of beneficial bacteria and reduces the dominance of harmful ones. This improves digestion and overall gut balance.

REDUCE INFLAMMATION:

- Many common issues like bloating and discomfort are linked to gut inflammation. Fasting gives your body a break from constant food intake, which can help reduce this inflammation. As a result, you may feel lighter and more comfortable.

THE GUT AND YOUR MIND

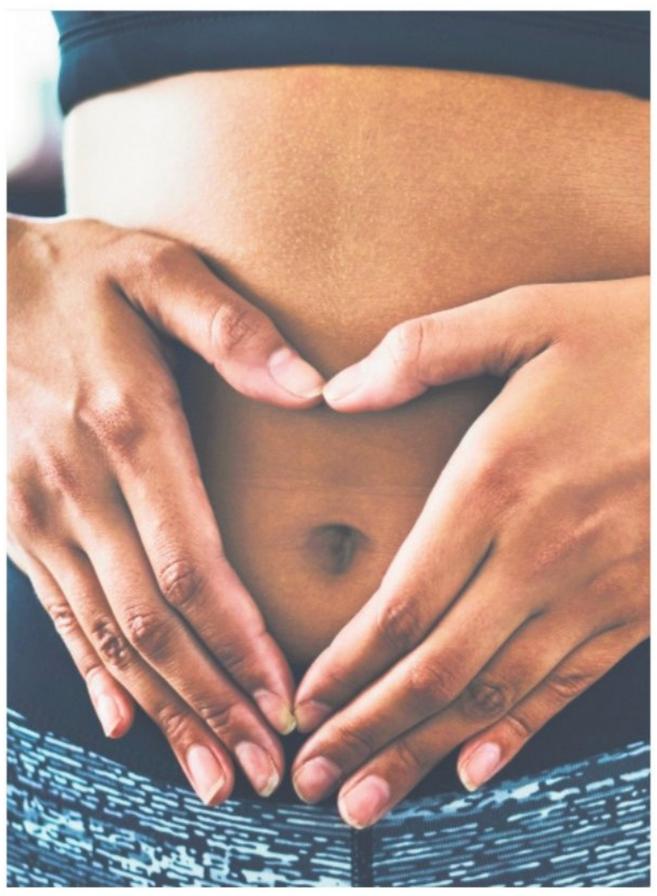
- Your gut and brain are closely connected. When your gut is balanced, your mood and focus improve. Fasting supports this connection by reducing stress on digestion and helping regulate hormones.

How to start safely

- Begin with a 12-hour fasting window
- Stay hydrated
- Break your fast with simple, balanced meals
- Avoid overeating after fasting

WHO SHOULD BE CAREFUL:

- Fasting is not for everyone. People with medical conditions, pregnant women, or those with a history of eating disorders should consult a doctor first.
- Fasting is not a quick fix, but a useful habit. It gives your gut time to rest, repair, and rebalance. When combined with good food and sleep, it can improve gut health naturally



By Madhura P Behki, nutrition expert, cult — a fitness and wellness platform

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

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bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com
@xpress_bengaluru

ARTCORNER

A MORNING RITUAL

Shruti Chandra's abstract work marks a significant transition – from earlier figurative explorations to a fully intuitive and immersive abstraction

JAP-ZAP

CE CHECKS OUT SOME TRENDING RECIPES INFLUENCED BY JAPANESE CUISINE

PARVANA K B

ANIME, manga, J-pop playlists and cosplay events have built a devoted fanbase for all things Japan around the world. Food, often lovingly animated and described in these stories, plays a big role in that fascination.

Many admit their first curiosity about Japanese cuisine began not in a restaurant, but on a screen, watching steaming bowls of ramen or perfectly plated desserts come to life. With more Indians travelling to Japan and returning with stories of late-night convenience store snacks and cosy neighbourhood eateries, that curiosity has only grown stronger.

Look around cities today, even outside the metros, and the change is hard to miss. Sushi, ramen bowls and matcha desserts are now common in cafe menus. What was once limited to high-end hotels has become far more accessible.

It is in this climate that one of the first viral food moments of the year has taken off – the Japanese cheesecake. Social media feeds are filled with videos of people mixing, chilling and slicing a dessert that promises big rewards for very little effort. Two ingredients, no baking, minimal prep and a surprisingly creamy result. It is easy to see why the trend has landed so well.

Despite its name, this version has little to do with the light, fluffy baked Japanese cheesecakes usually found in cafes. The viral recipe traces back to Japanese creators who began soaking plain biscuits in thick yoghurt and leaving the mixture in the

fridge overnight. By morning, the biscuits soften and merge with the yoghurt, creating a dessert that looks like cheesecake, even though it contains no cheese at all.

As the trend travelled across borders, people began experimenting with their own variations. Caramelised biscuits is often paired with espresso and a dusting of cocoa to mimic tiramisu flavours.

Some tried custard creams, or even savoury-sweet combinations using crackers layered with peanut butter and jam. What really makes the Japanese cheesecake trend work is how neatly it fits social platforms. There is a clear before and after transformation, an overnight wait that builds anticipation and a final spoonful that delivers a satisfying payoff.

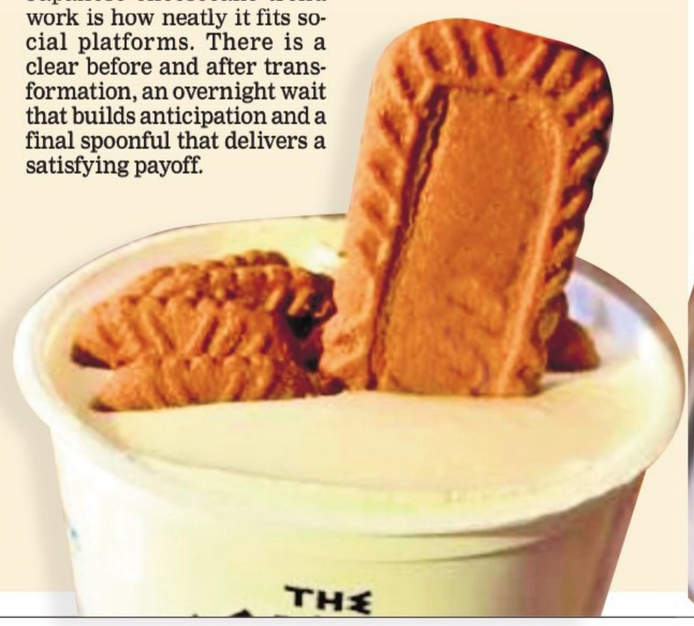
The 'better dessert' narrative has also helped keep the trend flourishing. Yoghurt carries strong associations with lighter eating, giving the dish a healthier image compared to traditional cheesecakes loaded with sugar, butter and cream cheese.

Not everyone is convinced, and that disagreement has become part of the fun.

A scroll through the comments reveals ongoing debates over whether the dish deserves to be called a cheesecake at all. Some enjoy the texture but reject the name, while others argue that it is simply clever marketing.

Its popularity says less about strict culinary definitions and more about how food travels today through screens, comment sections and curiosity. Simple, accessible and debatable, it is exactly the kind of dish social media was made for.

And it is not alone. Japan has a long history of pared-down, low-effort recipes that catch on for the same reasons. Here are a few that fit the same mould.



MILK MOCHI

Ingredients

- Dairy milk: 1 cup
- Tapioca starch: 2 tbsp
- Sugar: 2 tbsp

METHOD

Add the milk, tapioca starch, and sugar to a saucepan. Mix well until there are no lumps. Place the pan on medium heat and cook while stirring constantly. After about 10-15 minutes, the mixture will thicken and turn glossy. Once it reaches a stretchy, pudding-like consistency, remove from heat. Pour into a tray or mould, let it cool slightly, then refrigerate until set. Cut into pieces and serve.

JAPANESE MILK PUDDING

Ingredients

- Milk: 2 cups
- Sugar: 2 tbsp
- Gelatin powder: 1½ tsp
- Water: 2 tbsp
- Optional toppings: Fruits, caramel sauce, honey

METHOD

Sprinkle gelatin over the water and let it sit for a few minutes to bloom. In a saucepan, heat the milk and sugar on low heat until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and stir in the bloomed gelatin until fully dissolved. Pour the mixture into moulds or cups and refrigerate for 3-4 hours until set. Serve chilled, with toppings if desired.

JAPANESE SOUFFLÉ PANCAKES

Ingredients

- Egg: 4
- Granulated sugar: ¼ cup
- All-purpose flour: ½ cup
- Baking powder: ½ tsp
- Salt: A pinch
- Milk: 3 tbsp
- Vanilla extract: ½ tsp
- Water: 4 tbsp
- Butter: As needed

METHOD

In a bowl, whisk egg yolks, milk, and vanilla. Add the flour, baking powder and salt, and mix until smooth. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until frothy. Slowly add the sugar and continue beating until stiff peaks form. Gently fold one-third of the beaten egg whites into the yolk mixture to loosen it. Then fold in the remaining egg whites carefully, keeping the batter light and airy. Heat a non-stick pan on low heat and lightly grease it with butter. Spoon tall mounds of batter into the pan. Pour 1 tablespoon of water into the pan, away from the batter, and cover with a lid. Cook for 2 minutes. Add a little more batter on top of each pancake, cover again and cook for 5-6 minutes. Carefully flip the pancakes, add another tablespoon of water, cover and cook for 4 minutes until golden and fully set. Serve immediately.

JAPANESE-STYLE POTATO SALAD

Ingredients

- Potato: 500g
- Egg: 2
- Carrot: 1 medium
- Cucumber: 1 small
- Salt: To taste
- Garlic: 2 cloves
- Onion: ½ (small, thinly sliced)
- Oil: As needed
- Mayonnaise: ½ cup
- Black pepper: To taste
- Apple or rice vinegar: 1 tsp
- Honey or sugar: 1 tsp
- Toasted sesame oil: ½-1 tsp
- Mustard: 1 tsp

METHOD

Boil the potatoes and eggs together in salted water until the potatoes are soft. Remove the eggs, cool and peel them. Drain the potatoes and mash them while still warm. Slice the cucumber, add a little salt and keep aside for 10 minutes. Squeeze out the water and keep aside. In a pan, heat oil and fry the garlic and onion until lightly crisp and fragrant. Boil the carrot slices in water for a minute and drain. Chop the eggs and add them to the mashed potatoes along with the fried mixture and carrots. Mix gently. Add the cucumber, mayonnaise, vinegar, honey, sesame oil, mustard and black pepper. Mix until everything is just combined. Chill for 30 minutes before serving.

SOY-MARINATED EGG YOLK

Ingredients

- Egg yolk: As needed
- Soy sauce: Enough to cover

METHOD

Carefully separate the egg yolks and place them in a small bowl. Pour soy sauce over the yolks until they are just covered. Refrigerate for 2-4 hours until the yolks firm up slightly. Serve over hot rice or as a topping.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

SMARTADS

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **T. PERUMAL,** father of minor son CLEMENT LIKITH.P also known as CLEMENT LIKITH, residing at No. 9, "B" Cross, Indira Street, ITC Road, Bengaluru North, St. Thomas Town PO, Bengaluru 560084, Karnataka State, have changed my minor son's name from **CLEMENT LIKITH.P** also known as **CLEMENT LIKITH** to **LIKITH LOCHAN** vide affidavit, dated. 28th MARCH before Notary Public **MEER HASSAN,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **DINESH KUMAR MUNIRAMIAH** S/o **GURAPPA CHINNAPPA MUNIRAMIAH,** resident of No. 112/32, 1st Floor, 3rd Main Road, H C H Layout, Ganganagar, Bangalore- 560032, Karnataka, India, have changed the name of my daughter **PRAANAVI** (Holding Indian Passport No. L6301659) from **PRAANAVI** to **SAMIKSHAA,** vide affidavit dated 28th March 2026, before Notary **R BASAVARAJA** at Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) SILIYA KANJI RATHINGAL SIMON W/o Boney, Residing at No. Bhavya Serene Apartment, Flat No. 102, St. Norbert Church Road, Kasavanahalli, Bengaluru - 560035 have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) SILIYA KANJIRATHINGAL SIMON** to **(NEW NAME) SILIYA SIMON** vide affidavit dated 27.03.2026 sworn before Notary K.V Mani, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **CHAITRA DEVATHA,** aged about 50 years, W/o. Pratap L Devatha, No. 52 G11, Sri Vatsav Prasiddi Bikasipura Main Road, Yelachenahalli, Bengaluru-560111, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **CHAITRA T R (CHAITRA TUNGA RAMANANDA)** to **CHAITRA DEVATHA,** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026, sworn to before K.V. Mani, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SNEHA MITTAL, daughter of BIJENDRA and wife of PRAVEEN MITTAL.V, aged about 34 years, Residing at # 17, 2nd floor, Shiksha Nivas, 9th Cross, Gullappa Road Kammanahalli, Maruthi Sevanagar, Bangalore North, Bangaluru Karnataka - 560033, have changed my name from **SNEHALATA AGARWAL** to **SNEHA MITTAL,** vide affidavit dated 28/3/2026 sworn to before Senior Sheristedar J.M.F.C (Traffic Court - 3) Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, KESHAV KUMAR S/O: VIJAY KUMAR ROY, Age: 35, Occupation: Private salaried, residing at Flat-204, 3rd Floor, Tranquil Residency, Narayanghatta, Bommasandra - 560099, have changed my name from **KESHAV KUMAR ROY** to **KESHAV KUMAR,** vide affidavit dated 28/3/2026 sworn to before B M Chandrashekar Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MEGHNA P V,** Resident Flat No. 202, Lakshmi Springs, 10th Main, NRI Layout, Dooravaninagar Post, Ramamurthy Nagar, bengaluru-560016 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **MEGHNA ULLAS** to **MEGHNA P V** henceforth I shall be known and called as **MEGHNA P V** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 28/03/2026, sworn before Advocate and Notary **G. RAJENDRA** at Bengaluru.

NOTIFICATION
I, MOHAMMED FEROZ, S/o **Mohammed Kasim, aged about 76 years, R/at No.51, Gangamma Gudi, Bangalore North, Jalahalli, Bangalore, Karnataka-560013, hereby declare that my names MOHAMMED FEROZ & MOHAMMED FEROZ.K are one and the same names which belongs to myself only. Vide affidavit dated: 26-03-2026, sworn before Advocate & Notary G.R.Ravichandra Reddy, Bangalore.**

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SOWMYA SHRIKANTH NARAYANA,** W/o. Shrikanth Narayana, aged about 34 years, residing at Flat. 1404, Tower-3, L and T Raintree Boulevard Apartment Bellary Road, Near Phoenix Mall Of Asia, Byatarayanapura, Bangalore North, Bangalore-560092, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SOWMYA GEETHA SURENDRAN** to **SOWMYA SHRIKANTH NARAYANA,** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026, sworn to before K.V. Nanjaiah, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Raisa Kouser,** W/o. Matheen Pasha, aged about 27 years, residing at No. 62.B, Hunasanahalli Main Road, Yarab Nagar, Mohalla, Opp. Marriam School, Ramanagara-562159, Bengaluru South District, Karnataka State, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **RAISA KOUSER MOHAMMED ISMAIL** to **Raisa Kouser,** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026, sworn to before T.V. Indira, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, ABDUL WAHEED S/o late Abdul Khader, age 58 years, residing at No: 957, 1st cross, Muslim Colony, Kasaba Hobli, Devarajeevanahalli, Bengaluru - 560045, have changed my name from **ABDUL AYAZ** to **ABDUL WAHEED,** vide affidavit dated 4/3/2026 sworn to before A Idinabba Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MUNIYAPPA M,** aged about 56 years, S/o, Late. Muniswamy, Residing at, No.42, 1st Main, 4th Cross Road, Near Mariyamma Temple, Janatha Colony, Jakkasandra, Bengaluru-560034, state that both the Names **DODDAMUNIYAPPA** and **MUNIYAPPA M,** belongs to mine only and one and the same person, vide Affidavit dated:28-03-2026, before Notary Public, B.M. Chandrashekar, Bangalore. I shall be known and called as **MUNIYAPPA M,** for all Official & Future Purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **JAI MAHADEV PRASAD,** aged about 19 years, S/o. Mahadeva Swamy, residing at No.83, Mahadeshwara Nilaya, 2nd Main, S.B.M Colony, Near Punjab National Bank, Anandnagar, Hebbal, H.A Farm Post, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru-560024, Karnataka, further state that the above mentioned names i.e., **JAI MAHADEV PRASAD MAHADEVA SWAMY** and **JAI MAHADEV PRASAD** are the name of one and the same and refer to a single person and that is myself. And I hereby declare that henceforth my name be considered as **JAI MAHADEV PRASAD** in all documents. vide affidavit dated 27/03/2026 Sworn before Advocate and Notary **SHIVAKUMAR M N** at Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, KARPAL SINGH Residing at First Floor, No. 61, G No. 10th Street, 10th Cross, Halasuru, BENGALURU-560008, have changed my Minor Daughter's name from **(OLD NAME) KARITKA THAKUR to (NEW NAME) KIRTI THAKUR** vide affidavit dated 25.03.2026 sworn before Notary A.R.Muneer Ahmed., Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **Ateeq Ahmed** S/o. Hasan Ahmed Khazi H, aged about 39 years, residing at No. 162, 5th Cross, 3rd Main, Gokula 1st Stage, 1st Phase, HMT Layout, Mathikere, Bengaluru-560054, do hereby declare that the names **ATEEQ AHMED** and **ATEEQ AHMED H KHAZI** refer to one and the same person namely myself and both the names are being used in different records to denote me, and that the my mother both names i.e, **AYESHA SULTANA** and **AYESHA A KHAZI,** are one and the same my mother name only vide affidavit dated 27.03.2026, sworn to before XXXVIII Addl. Chief Judicial Magistrate Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VISHWAJIT UMESH TANDEL,** S/o. Umesh Anant Tandel, No. 876/1F, Jaynagar, Khursawada Kajubag, Karwar, Uttara Kannada-581301, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **VISHWAJIT** to **VISHWAJIT UMESH TANDEL,,** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026, sworn to before K.V. Mani, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I. Abhiram.N.S S/o Nagaraj.H. Aged about 39 years, R/at No. 124/1, SV Residency, 3rd Floor, Flat No. 108, Nethaji Road, KEB Quarters: Tyagarajanagara, Bangalore South, Bangalore-560 028, have changed my minor son's name from **Atharv Abhiram Sindhe** to **ATHARVA.A.S,** vide affidavit dated 24/3/2026 sworn to before Aruna V Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
Mrs. Shyamala Venkatesh, aged about 67 years, D/O Shree B.L.N. Adiga, residing at No.9C, 59, 1st Main, 9th Cross, Srinidhi Layout, Konanakunte, Bangalore-560062, Karnataka, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as, I, state that earlier I had executed an affidavit and made a newspaper publication dated : 16/06/2012 declaring that my name "B. L. **SHYAMALA DEVI** shall be known and called as **"SHYAMALA VENKATESH."** I submit that **GIRIJA, B. L. SHYAMALA** DEVI and **"SHYAMALA VENKATESH"** refer to one and the same person, namely myself. Vide Affidavit **DATE: 26/03/2026,** SWORN TO BEFORE, NOTARY and ADVOCATE **A. IDINABBA,** BENGALURU.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **KIRUTHIKA MANOHAR ALIAS KIRUTHIKA SATISHBABU** alias **KIRUTHIKA SATHISHBABU** alias **KIRUTHIKA,** aged about 42 years, D/o. Dr. V. Manohar, presently residing at # C009, Gopalan Millenium Habitat, ITPL Road, Near CMRIT College, Kundalahalli, Bangalore-560037, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Kiruthika Manohar** alias **KIRUTHIKA SATISHBABU alias KIRUTHIKA SATHISHBABU alias KIRUTHIKA to "KIRUTHIKA MANOHAR".** Henceforth I shall be known and called as **"KIRUTHIKA MANOHAR"** for all purposes, vide Affidavit sworn before Advocate and Notary **Smt. Vatsala** dated 27th March 2026 at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) SHAREEFA B I, Residing at No. Old Post Office Road, Hoskote - 562 114, Bangalore Rural District - 562 114, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) SHAREEFA B I to (NEW NAME) SHAREEFA BI,** vide affidavit dated 27.03.2026 sworn before Notary R.Jyshree., Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
We, **V. DEEPA,** W/o. Sri. Annoji Rao T.M., Aged about 40 years, **Sri. Annoji Rao T.M.,** Aged about 46 years, S/o. T. Manjappa, both are residing at No. 313, 3rd Block, 6th Cross, HMT Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru - 560 097, do hereby declare that we have changed our minor daughter's name from **Thaniya .A** to **Vihani Manya Rao** vide affidavit dated 27.03.2026 sworn before G.R. Ravichandra Reddy, Advocate & Notary Public, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Rida Ul Haya,** D/o. Mohammed Ismail Pasha, aged about 25 years, residing at No, 19/1/9B, Mahaboob Nagar, Ramanagar-562159, Bengaluru South District, Karnataka, State, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Rida Ul Haya Mohammed Ismail** to **Rida Ul Haya,** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026, sworn to before T.V. Indira, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, AMAR S S/o Sri.Shankar, aged about 34 years, residing at No.22, 8th B main, 4th Cross, BTM I Stage, NIMHANS, HSCB Layout, Bengaluru - 560029, have changed my name from **AMAR S** to **AMAR S RAO,** vide affidavit dated 28/3/2026 sworn to before Puttaramaiah Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **KISHAN SREENIVASA MURTHY, S/o SREENIVASA MURTHY.G,** aged about 26 years, R/at No.328, 15th C Cross, 6th E Main, Mahalakshmi Layout, Bangalore-560086, hereby declare that in my Passport (P5315731) my father's name has been entered as **SREEENIVAS MURTHY** instead of **SREENIVASA MURTHY.G.**
I hereby state that both the names **SREEENIVAS MURTHY & SREENIVASA MURTHY.G** are one and the same names which belongs to my father itself. In future i use my father's name as **SREENIVASA MURTHY.G** only. Vide affidavit dated : 28-01-2026, sworn before Notary S.R. Paramashivaiah, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Sharanabasappa Ainapur,** S/o Murigeppa Ainapur, aged about 41 years, R/at No.4/23, Block No.4, Malli, Jevargi, Gulbarga – 585325. I have changed my name from **SHARANABASAPPA** to **SHARANABASAPPA AINAPUR.** For all purposes Vide Affidavit Dated 26.03.2026 sworn before Advocate and Notary H. R. Karunakara. Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SAI USHA LAKSHMI SAHASRA KANTETY,** D/o Srikiran Kantety R/o No.248, 2nd Cross, 11th Main RBI Layout, JP Nagar 7th Phase Bengaluru - 560078, have changed my name from **SAI USHA LAKSHMI SAHASRA KANTETY** to **LAKSHMI SAHASRA KANTETY,** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026, sworn before notary Mohammed Hussain K, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Asma Gulam Ahmed Khan,** D/o. Gulam Ahmed Khan, W/o. Imran Ahmed Khalidi, Aged about 39 years old, Residing at No. 27/1, Maskan Omran, 4th Main, SK Garden, Bangalore North, Benson Town, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560046, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Asma Gulam Ahmed** to **Asma Gulam Ahmed Khan** vide affidavit dated 28.03.2026 sworn before N. Kanchivaradaraju, Advocate & Notary Public, Government of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SUMAN JAIN, daughter of VINOD MITTAL R and wife of VIKAS JAIN, aged about 39 years, Résiding at No. 281 Srivari Manor Flat No. S-2, 4th Cross; BCC Layout, Vijaynagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560040, have changed my name from **SUMAN MITTAL V** to **SUMAN JAIN,** vide affidavit dated 28/3/2026 sworn to before Senior Sheristedar J.M.F.C (Traffic Court - 3) Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SHASHIKUMAR G S/o Gopal, aged about 36 years, residing at Boovanahalli Village, Doddasanne, Bengaluru Rural District, Karnataka-562110, have changed my name from **SHASHIKUMAR** to **SHASHIKUMAR G** and my Father Correct name is **GOPAL,** vide affidavit dated 28/3/2026 sworn to before R S Vijay Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

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SAPTHAMI GOWDA TO STAR ALONGSIDE SRIIMURALI IN *UGRAYUDHAM*

The actor is set to play the female lead in the ambitious historical drama directed by Puneeth Rudranag

Sapthami Gowda

A SHARADHAA

SAPTHAMI Gowda, who has been steadily curating an interesting slate of projects, is said to be part of Sriimurali's ambitious period action drama *Ugrayudham*, which is currently under production. Directed by debutant Puneeth Rudranag and produced by Jayaram Devasamudra under the Suram Movies banner, the film is mounted on a large scale.

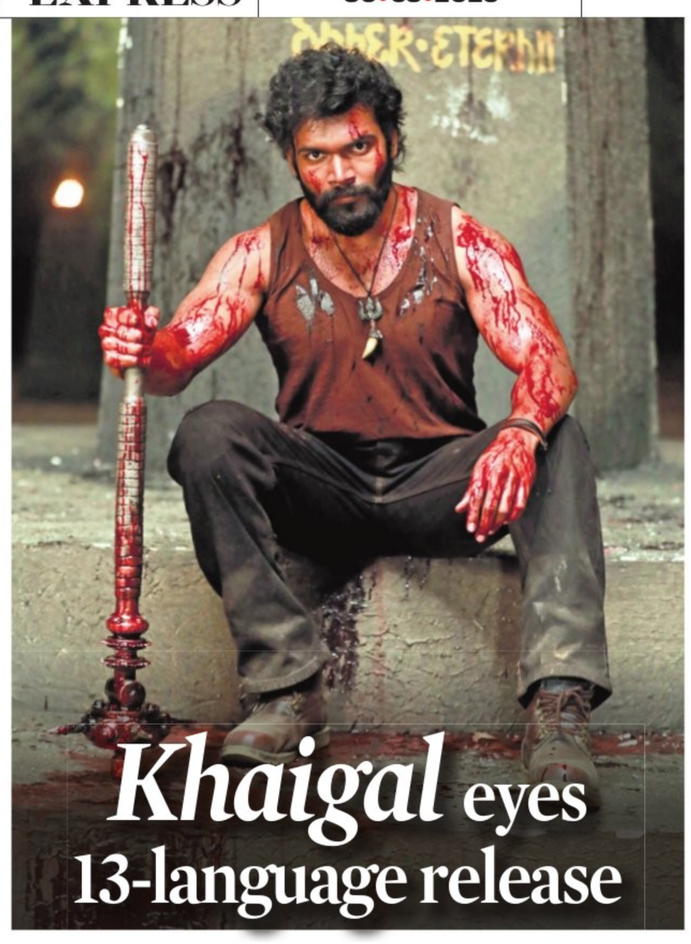
While an official announcement is still awaited, sources indicate that Sapthami is said to have joined as the female lead, marking her first on-screen collaboration with Sriimurali. *Ugrayudham* is believed to draw from a story set roughly 500 years ago, rooted in period elements and blended with cinematic imagination.

With *Ugrayudham*, Sriimurali is experimenting with a new look tailored to the historical setting. Early indications suggest that Sapthami will also be seen in a royal avatar, although details about her character remain under wraps.

Introduced by Suri in *Popcorn Monkey Tiger*, Sapthami rose to fame with Rishab Shetty's *Kantara*, produced by Hombale Films. The actor has since expanded her presence with projects in Hindi and Telugu. Following her recent outing in *The Rise of Ashoka*, *Ugrayudham* could mark another interesting addition to her film lineup.

On the technical front, *Ugrayudham* has cinematography by Sanketh (Mys) and art direction by Amar, while Nirmal Kumar, known for *Salaar*, is handling the visual effects.

Meanwhile, Sapthami is also working on *Halagali* alongside Dhananjay, directed by Sukesh Nayak, another period film, which is currently on the floors.



Khaigal eyes 13-language release

Director Yashwin calls it a story beyond borders

CE FEATURES

THE makers of *Khaigal*, an upcoming Kannada-Telugu bilingual, are planning to release the film in 13 languages, including Spanish, Chinese, and Sinhala. Rooted in themes of oppression and resistance that transcend borders, the makers aim to connect with a wider international audience through a story that reflects shared human struggles.

Writer-director Yashwin says the multilingual release strategy is central to the film's vision. "The story of *Khaigal* is rooted in oppression, resistance, and the human cost of silence, realities that are not confined to one region or culture," he explains. "These experiences echo across the world, which is why we felt the film should reach beyond linguistic boundaries. Releasing it in multiple languages allows the story to travel and connect with diverse audiences."

Headlined by Jai Siddarth, the film follows a man shaped by deep emotional scars who rises against a system built on fear and silence. His journey evolves from personal anguish into a larger fight for justice, dignity, and reckoning. Set between the 1940s and the 1980s, *Khaigal* blends a historical backdrop with an intense, character-driven narrative.

Backed by GR Production and RS Production, the film also features Sushmita Singh and Aamshi Uday in key roles. With cinematography by Devadeep, production design by Arunachalanaani, and art direction by Ravi Kondi, the music is composed by Priyesh Mothukuri, and editing by Preetham.

With its teaser shoot wrapped and the first schedule completed, *Khaigal* is planning to rope in a larger ensemble cast, with the team looking to approach actors such as Sanjay Dutt, among others.

Glen Powell joins *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*

CE FEATURES

GLEN Powell is all set to voice the iconic role of Fox McCloud in *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie* from Universal, the sequel to the 2023 box office hit The Super Mario Bros. Movie. Directed by Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, who also directed The Super Mario Bros Movie, the film is releasing theatrically on April 1.

McCloud is a professional pilot who leads the mercenary team Star Fox. He also appeared in the larger Nintendo space as the protagonist, including the Super Smash Bros. series.

The Super Mario Bros Movie follows the adventure of two Italian American plumbers, Mario and Luigi, who get entangled in a war between the Mushroom Kingdom, headed by Princess Peach, and the Koopas, headed by Bowser. In the sequel, *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie,* Mario and Luigi, along with their friends, adventure into outer space where they meet Princess Rosalina and face off against Bowser and his son, Bowser Jr.

Simple Suni's next, *Moda Kavida Vathavarana*, locks release date

A still from the film

CE FEATURES

WITH a first-time lead, a mentor-driven production, and a genre-led narrative approach, Simple Suni backs emerging talent with his latest production, *Moda Kavida Vathavarana*, a science fiction romance slated for theatrical release on June 26. The film serves as a launchpad for his protégé Sheelam, who transitions from supporting roles to a lead actor with this project.

The release date was announced via a stylised poster designed by Ashwin, reflecting the film's tonal blend of mood and mystery. The title, which translates to "A Clouded Atmosphere," hints at a narrative that merges emotional storytelling with speculative elements.

As for the genre, science fiction romance remains underexplored in mainstream Kannada cinema, and Suni attempts to tap into this space with the film. *Moda Kavida Vathavarana* is produced under the Ram Movies banner by Mysuru Ramesh, Srirangaraju, Lokesh Belavadi, and Goa Ramesh, the team previously associated with Ondu Sarala Prema Kathe.

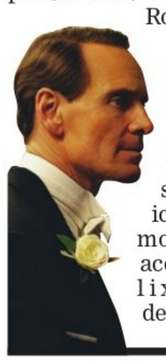
The technical crew includes cinematographer Santosh Rai Pathaje, while Judah Sandhy and Jade compose the music. Aditya Kashyap handles the editing. The soundtrack has already generated early traction with the single 'Nannedeya Haadondanu,' performed by Sanjith Hegde.

Michael's look from *Kennedy* series out

CE FEATURES

NETFLIX dropped a BTS photograph from its upcoming political series, titled *Kennedy*, offering a first look at Michael Fassbender's titular character in it. Showrunner Sam Shaw's series stars Fassbender as Joseph Patrick *Kennedy*, politician and former American President John F *Kennedy*'s father. The latest update comes a few days after the streamer announced its cast additions for the series. As previously reported, it also stars Laura Donnelly as Joseph Patrick *Kennedy*'s wife, Rose *Kennedy*.

The actors playing the couple's children are Nick Robinson (Joe Kennedy Jr), Joshuah Melnick (Jack Kennedy), Georgina Bitmead (Eunice Kennedy), Saura Lightfoot-Leon (Kick Kennedy), Miley Locke (younger Kick), Lydia Peckham (Rosemary Kennedy), and Tipper Seifert-Cleveland (younger Rosemary).



Currently in production, the series "explores the lives, loves, rivalries and tragedies that shaped the most iconic dynasty in modern history," according to Netflix's official description.

Matka King to premiere next month

CE FEATURES

THE teaser and the OTT premiere date of Vijay Varma-headliner series *Matka King* were unveiled by the makers on Saturday. The series will start streaming on Prime Video from April 17.

Inspired by true events and mounted as a period drama set in the 1960s, *Matka King* is created by Sairat filmmaker Nagraj Manjule and Abhay Koranne. Nagraj is also the series director, in addition to being one of the producers. "In this fictional tale set in 1960s Mumbai, an enterprising cotton trader who craves legitimacy and respect, starts a new gambling game dubbed 'Matka', that takes the city by storm and democratises a terrain previously reserved for the rich and elite," the official logline reads.

Besides Vijay Varma, the series also features Gulshan Grover, Kritika Kamra, Sai Tamhankar, Jamie Lever, Girish Kulkarni, Bharat Jadhav, Cyrus Sahukar, Bhupendra Jadawat, and Siddharth Jadhav in the ensemble cast.

Amalamrutha, based on the life and legacy of Sri Raghavendra Swamy, in the works

CE FEATURES

AMALAMRUTHA, based on the life and legacy of Sri Raghavendra Swamy, has completed its shoot and is currently gearing up for release. The film has been shot across key locations, including Channapatna, Abburupete, Srirangam, Srimushnam, Kumbakonam, Mannargudi, and Chintamani, reflecting the spiritual significance associated with these places. Produced under Siri Productions, the film is written and directed by Mysuru-based Gururaj Rao MS, who has also backed the project. A recent special screening, attended by seers and government officials, received a positive response, strengthening the team's confidence ahead of its theatrical release. If all proceeds as planned, the film is slated to release in May.

KS Govindaraj Rao plays the lead, essaying multiple roles including Bahlika Raja, Vyasaraja, and Raghavendra Swamy. The supporting cast includes Veerendra Acharya, Subbarao, Chaithra Bharadwaj, Master Suchendra, Yashas, Suman, Srikant, and Deepak.

The film has music composed by Vidushi Ratnaprasad, based on Haridasa compositions, with cinematography by Pradeep and editing by Swamy.

John Hannah returns to *The Mummy* franchise

CE FEATURES

UNIVERSAL Studios' *The Mummy* Reboot is bringing back the iconic trio: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz, and John Hannah. Hannah, who plays Evelyn O'Connell's brother Jonathan, has officially joined the cast of the upcoming instalment in the horror-adventure franchise, returning to the film series after 18 years. As reported earlier, Radio Silence's Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett will direct the upcoming film from a script by David Coggeshall. The film will reportedly be the fourth film in the franchise and a continuation of the events from the second Mummy film, ignoring the third part. Headlined by Brendan Fraser, *The Mummy* franchise spawned three films.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

A SPACE MARKETING INITIATIVE

01 | MONDAY | 30.03.2026 | BENGALURU | HUBBALLI | BELAGAVI | KALABURAGI | SHIVAMOGGA | MANGALURU

Fueling Growth Across sectors

Engines of Enterprise

The MSME Story

MSMEs in Karnataka: The Quiet Drivers of Growth

Karnataka's economic story is often told through its large industries and global technology presence. Yet, beneath this visible layer lies a dense and dynamic network of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that quietly sustain the state's industrial strength. Spread across cities, towns and semi-urban clusters, these enterprises form a crucial link between local skill, production and market demand.

MSMEs in Karnataka are not confined to a single sector. They operate across manufacturing, services and trade, often adapting to local conditions and resources. Whether it is a small fabrication unit in an industrial area, a family-run garment workshop, or a specialised service provider, these businesses reflect a pattern of decentralised growth that supports both livelihoods and regional balance.

Diverse Sectors, Shared Momentum

The strength of Karnataka's MSME ecosystem lies in its diversity. Food processing, textiles, electronics, automobile components and chemicals form some of the core sectors where small and medium enterprises have established a steady presence. Many of these businesses operate as suppliers to larger industries, creating a layered industrial structure where scale and agility coexist.

In urban centres like Bengaluru, industrial clusters such as Peenya have become hubs of concentrated activity. These clusters bring together enterprises from different sectors, enabling shared infrastructure, skilled labour and supplier networks. At the same time, smaller towns across the state host units that are closely tied to local resources, including agriculture, textiles and traditional crafts.

This combination of urban concentration and rural dispersion gives Karnataka's MSME sector a distinctive balance. It allows industries to scale where needed while maintaining a wide base of smaller enterprises.

Employment and Everyday Economy

MSMEs play a central role in generating employment, particularly for semi-skilled and skilled workers. Their ability to operate at smaller scales makes them accessible entry points for entrepreneurs and workers alike. Many businesses are family-run or community-based, creating employment within local ecosystems rather than concentrating it in a few large centres.

Beyond direct employment, MSMEs contribute to the everyday functioning of the economy. They supply components, provide services, and support distribution networks that larger industries depend on. In doing so, they act as connectors across sectors, ensuring that economic activity remains continuous and adaptive.

Adapting to Change

Like most small business ecosystems, MSMEs in Karnataka operate within a landscape of constraints. Access to timely finance remains a recurring concern, particularly for enterprises that lack formal credit histories. Management practices, often shaped by experience rather than formal training, can also limit scalability.

However, there has been a gradual shift in how these challenges are approached. Increased focus on skill development, exposure to structured management practices and the adoption of digital tools are beginning to reshape operations. Many enterprises are moving towards more organised systems in accounting, inventory and customer engagement.

Ease of doing business reforms simplify regulations, helping MSMEs start and operate, though practical challenges at the ground level still remain.

The Role of Policy and Support Systems

Karnataka's policy environment has consistently recognised the importance of MSMEs. Industrial policies have aimed to create a supportive ecosystem through infrastructure development, incentives and skill-building initiatives. Access to credit, though uneven, is supported by a mix of banking institutions and non-banking financial companies that cater to smaller enterprises.

Support systems now offer training, sector initiatives and market access, enabling MSMEs to address challenges while maintaining operational independence.

Looking Ahead

MSMEs in Karnataka are evolving through a blend of continuity and adaptation, integrating digital tools while retaining local strengths. Their growth remains gradual rather than dramatic. Though often understated, these enterprises play a vital role in sustaining the state's economy, contributing steadily through distributed, resilient, and everyday industrial and service activities.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Engines of Enterprise

A SPACE MARKETING INITIATIVE

The MSME Story

02 | MONDAY | 30.03.2026 | BENGALURU | HUBBALLI | BELAGAVI | KALABURAGI | SHIVAMOGGA | MANGALURU

Fueling Growth Across sectors

THE IMPORTANCE OF MSMEs; THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH & ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

Joohi Smita Sinha, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Bengaluru Circle

MSMEs as Growth Drivers.

MSMEs are a critical pillar of the Indian economy and play a vital role in driving economic growth, employment generation, and entrepreneurship development. At State Bank of India, we view MSMEs as key contributors to the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India.

The sector has witnessed significant expansion over the years and currently comprises over 7.4 crore enterprises across the country, employing approximately 32.8 crore people, making it the second-largest source of employment after agriculture. MSMEs make a substantial contribution to the Indian economy: Contribute around 30–31% to India's GDP; about 35% of manufacturing output; and around 45–48% of India's total exports.

By facilitating accessible finance, promoting entrepreneurship, and enabling modernization and expansion of MSMEs, SBI aims to further strengthen this sector and contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth in India.

Tailored Financial Solutions

State Bank of India offers a wide range of specialized financial products and schemes designed to support MSMEs at every stage of their business lifecycle, from start-up to expansion.

Some of the key offerings of SBI are:

- SBI SME Loan Schemes such as SME Smart Score Loan and SME Assist for quick and simplified credit appraisal.
- SBI Asmitha loan to promote entrepreneurship among women entrepreneurs.
- PMEGP (Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme) for new enterprises.
- Mudra Loans (Shishu, Kishore, Tarun & Tarun Plus) for micro enterprises and start-ups.
- CGTMSE-backed loans providing collateral-free credit support.
- Working Capital Finance, Term Loans, and Equipment Finance to support business expansion and modernization.
- Trade Finance solutions including export-import financing for MSME exporters.
- Startup Current Account (Shubharambh) for Entities having a valid Startup Certificate
- The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) offers enhanced credit guarantee coverage for startups, providing higher protection and expanded support, thereby strengthening financing for early-stage enterprises

These products are complemented by SBI's dedicated SME branches, Relationship Managers, and Digital lending platforms (Yono Business), ensuring convenient and customized financial solutions.

Access to Credit

Recognizing that timely and affordable credit is essential for the growth of MSMEs, State Bank of India has implemented several initiatives to simplify lending processes and improve credit accessibility.

Key initiatives include:

- Digital loan processing platforms enabling faster approvals and significantly reducing paperwork.
- Use of data analytics and credit scoring models for quick and objective credit assessment.
- Collateral-free lending through Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), which guarantees loans up to ₹10 crore for eligible MSMEs.
- Pre-approved and instant MSME loans up to Rs 50 lacs, through digital platforms, such as SBI PABL Loan, SBI BRE Loan, SBI PAsBL Loan can be sanctioned within minutes based on digital data assessment.
- Dedicated MSME Relationship Managers and specialized SME branches providing guidance and faster service.
- Integration with GST data, bank statements and digital financial records for efficient credit appraisal.

State Bank of India has an MSME loan portfolio exceeding 5 lakh crore, making it one of the largest lenders to the sector. Through these measures, SBI continues to strengthen its commitment to empowering MSMEs with easier access to finance, thereby fostering entrepreneurship, employment generation, and economic development.

4. Digital Banking and MSMEs

State Bank of India is leveraging digital transformation to simplify banking and enhance financial access for MSMEs. Through platforms such as YONO Business, the Bank enables MSME customers to conveniently manage their accounts, payments, collections, and trade transactions through secure digital channels. The YONO platform ecosystem has over 70 million registered users, providing digital banking and business services.

SBI has also introduced digital lending platforms that facilitate quicker loan processing through data-based credit assessment using GST data, bank statements, and other digital financial records. These digital processes enable instant MSME loans up to ₹50 lakh through pre-approved digital products.

In addition, the Bank provides online trade finance services, supply chain financing, and digital payment solutions to support MSMEs in managing working capital efficiently. Today, over 90% of SBI's transactions are conducted through digital channels, reflecting strong digital adoption.

These digital initiatives not only improve operational efficiency for businesses but also enable MSMEs to scale operations by accessing banking services anytime and anywhere.

Support Beyond Financing

Apart from providing credit facilities, State Bank of India actively supports MSMEs through advisory services, capacity-building initiatives, and ecosystem partnerships. SBI conducts MSME outreach programs, customer engagement meetings, and entrepreneurship awareness camps across the country, reaching thousands of entrepreneurs every year to guide business owners on financial planning, government schemes, and best business practices.

The Bank also collaborates with industry bodies, government institutions, and development agencies to strengthen the MSME ecosystem and promote entrepreneurship. Through its extensive network of over 23,226 branches and more than 63,000 ATMs, SBI provides widespread support and accessibility to MSME customers.

Through these initiatives, SBI aims to help entrepreneurs improve their financial management, adopt modern technologies, and build sustainable business models for long-term growth, supporting over 1 crore MSME customers across India.

Government Schemes and Policy Support

State Bank of India plays a significant role in implementing various Government of India initiatives aimed at promoting MSME growth.

The Bank actively supports major government schemes such as:

CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) – provides collateral-free loans up to ₹10 crore. Since its inception, CGTMSE has supported over 90 lakh loan guarantees across India.

PMEGP (Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme) – promotes self-employment by providing subsidy-linked loans. The scheme has generated over 80 lakh employment opportunities since launch.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) – supports micro enterprises with loans under Shishu (up to ₹50,000), Kishore (₹50,000–₹5 lakh), and Tarun (₹5–10 lakh) categories. Over ₹27 lakh crore worth of Mudra loans have been sanctioned nationwide since 2015.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) – introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to support businesses with additional working capital.

By effectively implementing these initiatives and aligning with Priority Sector Lending (PSL) guidelines, SBI ensures wider credit outreach. As India's largest public sector bank, SBI has an MSME credit portfolio exceeding ₹5 lakh crore, supporting millions of small businesses across the country.

Future Outlook

Looking ahead, State Bank of India remains committed to further strengthening the MSME ecosystem through technology-driven banking, innovative financial products, and enhanced credit delivery mechanisms.

India currently has more than 7 crore MSMEs, making the sector one of the largest drivers of employment and entrepreneurship. With increasing digitization and government support, the sector is expected to contribute over 40% of India's GDP in the coming years.

The Bank sees significant opportunities for MSMEs in areas such as digital commerce and fintech-enabled businesses, Export-oriented manufacturing, Green and sustainable enterprises, Technology-driven service industries. SBI aims to support these emerging opportunities through improved digital lending platforms, faster credit appraisal systems and deeper engagement with MSME customers.

By fostering innovation, supporting entrepreneurship, and enabling financial inclusion, SBI seeks to contribute meaningfully to the continued growth and resilience of the MSME sector in India.

Advice to Aspiring Entrepreneurs and MSME Owners

To advice to all aspiring entrepreneurs and MSME owners should focus on building strong business fundamentals, adopting digital technologies, and maintaining financial discipline. A clear business plan, efficient cash flow management, and proper record-keeping are essential for sustainable growth.

Entrepreneurs should also actively explore government schemes, financial support programs, and digital platforms that can help expand their businesses. Building strong relationships with financial institutions and continuously upgrading skills and technology will help MSMEs remain competitive in today's evolving economic environment.

With determination, innovation, and the right financial support, MSMEs can scale their businesses and contribute significantly to India's economic growth and employment generation.

MSMEs, The Raison d'être of India's All-Important Economic Growth

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) form one of the most vital segments of India's economic structure. Often described as the backbone of the economy, MSMEs contribute significantly to production, employment and exports. Their presence spans manufacturing, services and trade, making them an essential driver of both economic activity and social mobility.

Unlike large industries that are concentrated in specific regions, MSMEs are widely distributed across urban, semi-urban and rural areas. This wide spread ensures that economic benefits reach a larger population, supporting inclusive growth. From small workshops and food processing units to service providers and emerging technology firms, MSMEs reflect the diversity and adaptability of India's entrepreneurial landscape.

Employment and Livelihoods

One of the most important contributions of MSMEs is in employment generation. As the second largest source of employment after agriculture, they provide jobs to millions across skill levels. They absorb unskilled and semi-skilled labour while also creating opportunities for skilled professionals and first-generation entrepreneurs.

In many regions, MSMEs reduce the pressure of migration by enabling people to find work closer to home. They create local ecosystems where livelihoods are sustained through interconnected activities such as production, supply, logistics and services. This ability to generate employment at scale, without requiring large capital investments, makes MSMEs a crucial component of India's development model.

Driving Economic Growth and Flexibility

MSMEs contribute substantially to the country's overall economic output. Their role goes beyond numbers, as they add flexibility and resilience to the industrial system. Small and medium enterprises can adapt quickly to changing market demands, experiment with new ideas and respond to local needs in ways that larger organisations often cannot.

They also promote diversification by producing a wide range of goods and services. This diversity strengthens the economy by reducing dependence on a few sectors and encouraging balanced industrial development. In times of economic uncertainty, the distributed nature of MSMEs helps sustain activity and prevent sharp disruptions.

Supporting Exports and Global Trade

MSMEs play a significant role in India's export ecosystem. They contribute to a wide range of export categories including textiles, engineering goods, handicrafts and processed foods. Their ability to produce specialised and customised products makes them competitive in global markets.

By participating in exports, MSMEs not only bring foreign exchange into the country but also integrate local industries into global value chains. This exposure encourages improvements in quality, standards and efficiency, helping Indian businesses stay competitive internationally.

Encouraging Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Innovation in India is not limited to large corporations or research institutions. MSMEs often operate close to the ground, where they identify practical problems and develop cost-effective solutions. This makes them important contributors to grassroots innovation.

They also serve as entry points for entrepreneurship. Individuals with limited capital can start small businesses and gradually scale them over time. This culture of entrepreneurship strengthens economic independence and encourages self-reliance, particularly among youth and emerging business communities.

Promoting Inclusive Development

The presence of MSMEs in smaller towns and rural areas plays a key role in reducing regional disparities. By creating economic opportunities outside major cities, they help distribute income more evenly across the country.

Many MSMEs are family-run enterprises that sustain local traditions and crafts while adapting to modern markets. In sectors such as textiles, handicrafts and food processing, they preserve cultural heritage while generating income. This combination of economic and social impact makes MSMEs central to inclusive development.

Linkages with Large Industries

MSMEs also function as important partners in the broader industrial ecosystem. They supply components, provide specialised services and support larger manufacturing units. These linkages create integrated value chains where enterprises of different scales contribute to final output.

Such relationships improve efficiency and allow large industries to focus on core operations while relying on MSMEs for support functions. This interdependence strengthens the overall industrial structure.

The Role of the MSME Ministry

The MSME Ministry supports small businesses through policies, schemes and institutional networks offering training, technology and consultancy. It promotes finance access, credit support and exports, while strengthening entrepreneurship. It also backs traditional sectors like khadi and coir, contributing to rural employment, economic growth and preservation of cultural industries, while improving market linkages and encouraging wider participation.

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The MSME Story
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Fueling Growth Across sectors

WHY MSMEs REMAIN CENTRAL TO INDIA'S POLICY FOCUS

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) occupy a central place in India's economic thinking, not as a matter of sentiment but of structure. Their spread across sectors, regions and skill levels makes them indispensable to how the economy functions on a daily basis. Unlike large industries that operate in concentrated hubs, MSMEs are distributed widely, ensuring that economic activity is not confined to a few urban centres.

For policymakers, this distribution is critical. It allows growth to reach smaller towns and rural areas, supporting a more balanced pattern of development. This is one of the primary reasons the government continues to emphasise the sector in policy frameworks and economic planning.

Employment at Scale

One of the strongest reasons for the government's focus on MSMEs is their ability to generate employment. These enterprises absorb a large workforce, including those with limited formal training. In a country where job creation remains a key priority, MSMEs provide a practical and scalable solution.

They also reduce the pressure on agriculture by offering alternative livelihoods. In many regions, small enterprises create local employment opportunities that prevent large-scale migration to cities. This decentralised job creation supports social stability while strengthening local economies.

Driving Entrepreneurship

MSMEs are often the first step into entrepreneurship for many individuals. They require relatively lower capital and allow gradual scaling, making them accessible to first-generation business owners. By supporting MSMEs, the government is also promoting a broader entrepreneurial culture.

This has wider implications. A strong base of small businesses encourages innovation, fosters competition and builds resilience within the economy. It also creates a pipeline of enterprises that can grow into larger organisations over time.

Linkages with Industry and Supply Chains

Another reason for sustained policy attention is the role MSMEs play in supporting larger industries. They form an integral part of supply chains by providing components, services and specialised inputs. Without these linkages, large-scale manufacturing and production systems would face disruptions.

For the government, strengthening MSMEs also means strengthening the entire industrial ecosystem. A stable network of small and medium enterprises ensures continuity, flexibility and efficiency across sectors.

Contribution to Trade and Production

MSMEs contribute significantly to production and exports. Their ability to manufacture a wide range of goods, often tailored to niche markets, makes them valuable participants in both domestic and international trade.

Encouraging MSMEs helps diversify the export basket and reduces dependence on a limited set of industries. It also allows smaller players to integrate into global value chains, improving competitiveness and quality standards over time.

Policy Support and Formalisation

The government's focus on MSMEs is also reflected in efforts to formalise the sector. Simplified registration systems, access to credit and targeted schemes are designed to bring more enterprises into the formal economy.

Formalisation has multiple benefits. It improves access to finance, enhances transparency and allows businesses to scale more effectively. At the same time, it enables better policy targeting and support.

Financial access remains a key area of intervention. Many MSMEs face constraints in securing timely credit. Policy measures aim to address this gap through credit guarantee mechanisms, priority lending and support for small borrowers.

Addressing Structural Challenges

Despite their importance, MSMEs face persistent challenges. These include delays in payments, limited access to markets and gaps in technology adoption. Government initiatives often seek to address these issues through regulatory measures and support systems.

Mechanisms to ensure timely payments, platforms for dispute resolution and programmes for technology upgradation are part of this approach. The intent is not only to support existing enterprises but also to improve their long-term viability.

The Global Perspective

Globally, MSMEs drive jobs and inclusion, especially for vulnerable groups, while facing funding gaps, volatility and supply challenges requiring sustained policy support.

Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Shri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
GTTC
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
50 ANNIVERSARY
Department of Skill Development Entrepreneurship and Livelihood
Dr. Sharanprakash R. Patil
Hon'ble Minister for Medical Education & Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood
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Diploma in Electricals & Electronics
Diploma in Automation & Robotics
GTTC
1) GTTC Student Secures Gold Medal in Mechanical CAD Engineering at Russia Skill Competition, held in November 2025
2) 4 students of GTTC represented India at WorldSkills Asia – Taipei, Taiwan, held from 27.11.2025 to 29.11.2025, competing in Electrical Installation, Electronics, Mechanical CAD, and Mechatronics. Mr. Dhanush M secured a Medallion of Excellence in Electrical Installation, marking the first-ever Indian medal in this skill competition.
3) 3 GTTC students participated in the Skill Beyond Boundaries & Week Challenge held in Shanghai, China (01.12.2025–07.12.2025) and secured Bronze Medals in Intelligent Security Technology and Optoelectronics.
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Fueling Growth Across sectors

The Persistent and Evolving Challenges Facing MSMEs in India's Growth Journey

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises have long been recognised as one of the most dynamic and widely distributed segments of India's economy. They generate employment, support supply chains, and sustain local economies across both urban and rural landscapes. Yet, behind this contribution lies a complex web of challenges that continue to shape their growth trajectory. These challenges are not isolated. They are interconnected, often reinforcing one another and making it difficult for enterprises to scale or even sustain operations.

Understanding these issues in depth is essential, not only to appreciate the realities of MSMEs but also to recognise why policy support alone is not always sufficient.

Financial Constraints and Credit Access

Access to finance remains one of the most significant barriers for MSMEs. While formal banking systems have expanded and multiple schemes exist to support small enterprises, the gap between availability and accessibility persists.

Many MSMEs operate with limited financial documentation or irregular cash flows, which makes them appear risky to lenders. As a result, banks often impose stringent eligibility criteria, demand collateral, or offer credit at relatively high interest rates. For small businesses, especially those in early stages, meeting these requirements can be difficult.

This constraint affects more than just expansion plans. It impacts day-to-day operations such as managing working capital, purchasing raw materials, and meeting payroll obligations. Without reliable access to credit, MSMEs are forced to depend on informal sources of funding, which can further strain their finances.

Infrastructure Deficits

Infrastructure continues to be a structural limitation, particularly for enterprises operating outside major urban centres. Inconsistent electricity supply, inadequate transportation networks, and limited access to modern facilities directly affect productivity and efficiency.

For rural and semi-urban MSMEs, these challenges are even more pronounced. Delays in logistics increase costs, unreliable power disrupts production cycles, and poor connectivity restricts access to markets. These factors collectively reduce competitiveness, especially when compared to larger firms with better infrastructure support.

The absence of industrial clusters or well-equipped workspaces also limits opportunities for collaboration, innovation and shared resources, which are often crucial for smaller enterprises.

Regulatory and Compliance Burdens

Navigating regulatory frameworks is another significant challenge. MSMEs are required to comply with a range of laws related to taxation, labour, environment and business operations. While these regulations are essential for maintaining standards, their complexity often creates difficulties for smaller businesses.

Compliance requires time, expertise and administrative capacity, resources that MSMEs typically lack. For many entrepreneurs, especially first-time business owners, understanding and adhering to these requirements becomes a burden that diverts attention from core business activities.

Although efforts have been made to simplify procedures, inconsistencies in implementation and overlapping regulations still pose challenges at the ground level. This often leads to delays, penalties or reluctance to fully formalise operations.

Technological Lag and Digital Adoption

In an increasingly digital economy, the ability to adopt and integrate technology has become critical. However, many MSMEs continue to lag in this area. The reasons are multifaceted.

Limited financial resources make it difficult to invest in new technologies. At the same time, a lack of skilled manpower restricts the ability to effectively use digital tools. There is also a degree of hesitation or resistance to change, particularly among traditional businesses that have operated in conventional ways for years.

This technological gap affects productivity, quality control and market access. Without digital integration, MSMEs find it harder to reach wider audiences, streamline operations or compete with technologically advanced firms.

Market Competition and Branding Limitations

MSMEs operate in highly competitive environments where they often compete with larger domestic corporations as well as international players. While they may offer quality products or specialised services, their ability to market and brand themselves is limited.

Brand visibility requires investment in marketing, customer engagement and digital presence. For many MSMEs, these areas remain underdeveloped due to financial constraints and lack of expertise. As a result, even competitive products may fail to reach the right markets.

In export markets, this challenge becomes even more significant. Without strong branding and market positioning, MSMEs struggle to establish credibility and differentiate themselves.

Gaps in Business Expertise

Entrepreneurial spirit alone is not always sufficient to sustain a business. Running an enterprise requires a combination of technical knowledge and managerial skills. Many MSME owners possess deep understanding of their products or services but may lack expertise in areas such as financial planning, operations management and strategic decision-making.

This gap can lead to inefficiencies, poor cost management and missed growth opportunities. It also affects the ability to respond to market changes or adopt new business models.

Capacity-building initiatives and training programmes exist, but their reach and effectiveness vary. Bridging this knowledge gap remains a key challenge for the sector.

Hiring and Workforce Challenges

Attracting and retaining skilled talent is another persistent issue. MSMEs often struggle to compete with larger organisations that can offer higher salaries, better job security and clearer career growth paths.

The lack of brand recognition further reduces their visibility among potential employees. Even when suitable candidates are identified, retaining them becomes difficult due to limited resources and growth opportunities.

This leads to high employee turnover, which affects continuity and productivity. It also places additional pressure on business owners, who must constantly invest time and effort in recruitment and training.

Delayed Payments and Cash Flow Pressures

Cash flow management is a critical concern for MSMEs. Delayed payments from buyers, particularly larger companies, create significant financial stress. Since MSMEs typically operate on thin margins, such delays can disrupt operations and affect their ability to meet immediate expenses.

Although regulatory mechanisms exist to address delayed payments, enforcement remains inconsistent. Many small businesses hesitate to pursue formal dispute resolution due to time constraints or fear of damaging business relationships.

This issue highlights a structural imbalance within supply chains, where smaller enterprises often bear the burden of financial delays.

Limited Access to Markets

Market access is another area where MSMEs face constraints. While digital platforms have opened new opportunities, not all enterprises have the capacity to leverage them effectively.

Geographical limitations, lack of distribution networks and limited exposure to larger markets restrict growth potential. In many cases, MSMEs remain confined to local or regional markets, which limits scale and revenue.

Expanding market access requires not only infrastructure and technology but also knowledge of market dynamics, customer preferences and regulatory requirements in different regions.

Adapting to External Disruptions

MSMEs are particularly vulnerable to external shocks such as economic fluctuations, global market changes and disruptions in supply chains. Their limited reserves and smaller scale make it difficult to absorb sudden changes.

Events such as fluctuations in raw material prices, changes in demand patterns or disruptions in logistics can have immediate and significant impacts. Unlike larger firms, MSMEs often lack the buffers needed to navigate such uncertainties.

The Way Forward

Addressing the challenges faced by MSMEs requires a multi-dimensional approach. Financial access must be improved not just in terms of availability but also ease. Infrastructure development needs to extend beyond urban centres to ensure equitable growth.

Lesser-Known Realities of MSMEs in India

Did you know?
45% of India's exports come from MSMEs
Only ~5% MSMEs have access to formal credit
7+ Crore MSMEs employ 100+ million people.
High-risk financing: Entrepreneurs pledge homes & assets for loans
45-Day Payment Rule often ignored, leading to cash flow issues
Some MSMEs de-register to avoid burdens of formal compliance
Indian MSMEs are roughly half as productive as large firms

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are widely recognised for their contribution to employment, production and exports, yet several lesser-known aspects reveal a more complex picture beneath this visibility.

One of the most striking realities is the limited access to formal credit. Despite their scale and economic relevance, only a small fraction of MSMEs are able to secure institutional financing. This forces many to rely on informal or high-cost borrowing, increasing financial vulnerability and restricting growth.

Cash flow stress is another under-discussed issue. While regulations mandate timely payments to MSMEs, delays remain common in practice. Extended payment cycles often strain working capital, making it difficult for enterprises to sustain operations or invest in expansion.

Productivity also presents a hidden challenge. Compared to larger firms, many MSMEs operate at lower efficiency levels. This gap is not necessarily due to lack of effort, but often stems from limited access to technology, training and modern management practices.

Risk exposure at the individual level is equally significant. Many entrepreneurs pledge personal assets such as homes or savings to secure loans. This blurs the line between business and personal risk, making failure financially devastating.

There are also structural patterns worth noting. MSMEs tend to be concentrated in certain regions, reflecting uneven industrial development. At the same time, a notable proportion of enterprises are led by women, indicating growing but still evolving participation.

Another lesser-known trend is informalisation. Some enterprises choose to remain outside formal systems to avoid compliance burdens, even if it means losing access to institutional support.

KASSIA Championing MSME Growth in Karnataka

In an interaction with The New Indian Express, B. R. Ganesh Rao, President of KASSIA, appreciated the newspaper for highlighting MSME development and reaffirmed the association's commitment to strengthening Karnataka's MSME ecosystem.

B R. GANESH RAO
PRESIDENT

What is the role of KASSIA in strengthening MSMEs in Karnataka?
KASSIA is the apex body representing MSMEs in Karnataka, providing policy advocacy, advisory support, dispute resolution, capacity building, and market linkages to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of small industries.

How does KASSIA act as a bridge between MSMEs and the State Government?
KASSIA regularly engages with government departments, submits policy representations, and participates in consultative committees, ensuring MSME concerns are reflected in industrial and economic policy decisions.

In what ways has KASSIA influenced industrial policy decisions in Karnataka?
KASSIA has contributed policy recommendations on land allocation, infrastructure, power tariffs, taxation, cluster development, and simplification of regulatory approvals.

How effective has KASSIA been in representing MSMEs at the national level?
KASSIA works with national industry bodies and engages with central ministries and financial institutions to ensure Karnataka's MSME concerns are represented in national policy discussions.

What policy reforms has KASSIA demanded to improve ease of doing business for MSMEs?
Key demands include simplified GST compliance, reduced regulatory inspections, rational power tariffs, faster approvals, improved credit flow, and stronger mechanisms to address delayed payments. KASSIA also runs a dedicated GST & Tally Helpdesk to assist members with compliance.

What role does KASSIA play in dialogue with the Reserve Bank of India regarding credit policies?
KASSIA represents MSME concerns to banks and regulators, advocating improved priority sector lending, simplified credit appraisal, and better access to working capital.

How does KASSIA assist members in availing government subsidy and guarantee schemes?
Through awareness programs and advisory support, KASSIA guides members on subsidy schemes, credit guarantees, and documentation to help them access government benefits.

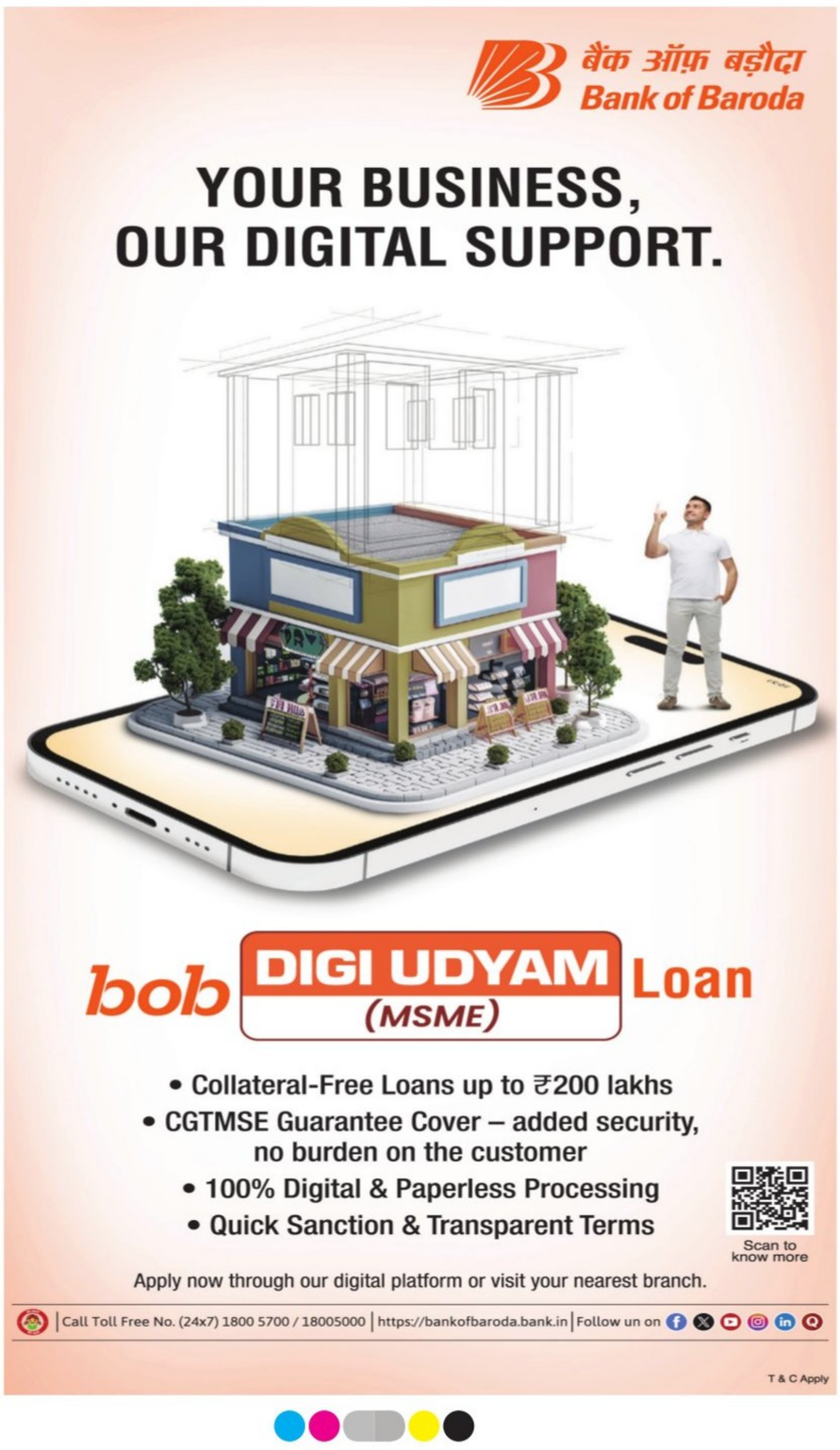
What training or skill development programs does KASSIA offer?
KASSIA conducts workshops on compliance, financial management, export readiness, quality certification, Industry 4.0, and digital transformation.

How does KASSIA promote digital transformation among small industries?
Through seminars, partnerships with technology providers, and advisory support—including the GST & Tally Helpdesk—KASSIA encourages ERP adoption, digital accounting, and automation.

Does KASSIA facilitate export promotion for MSMEs?
Yes. KASSIA promotes exports through awareness programs, trade delegations, and an Expert Export Help Desk that guides members on documentation, compliance, incentives, and global market access.

What are the key limitations faced by KASSIA in representing MSMEs?
Challenges include resource constraints, diverse sectoral needs within MSMEs, evolving regulations, and global economic uncertainties.

How can KASSIA strengthen its role in the MSME ecosystem?
By expanding digital member services, strengthening research-based policy advocacy, building national partnerships, and promoting innovation and startup engagement.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